

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

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Date: March 13, 2023

To: Chair Melissa Wiklund
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2107
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Tina Liebling
477 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

From: Superintendent Drew Evans

Chairs Liebling & Wiklund,

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, as the leader of the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force, is pleased to offer its strong support of Senate File 2269/House File 2505, which will provide much needed funds to help victims of labor trafficking.

The State of Minnesota recognizes that human trafficking (both sex and labor) is a significant issue affecting children, youth, and adults. Due to the state's efforts to strengthen its human trafficking laws, more is known about the extent of human trafficking in Minnesota. These efforts have included, but are not limited to the following achievements:

- 1) The development of a Safe Harbor framework decriminalizing prostitution of children and youth under age 18 and providing services through age 24 after a three – year planning process called “No Wrong Door”
- 2) Two Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Improving Outcomes for Youth and Child Victims of Human Trafficking grants received (FY 2016 and FY 2019) to support a state labor trafficking supporting a labor trafficking response, as well as deeper collaboration with Tribal Nations.

Sex trafficking investigation funding has been a priority at the legislature, resulting in increased awareness with so much great work done to eradicate this heinous crime of predators preying on the vulnerabilities of their victims. However, labor Trafficking, another type of human trafficking, has not received the same investment or increased awareness, though it shares many similarities with sex trafficking. Unfortunately, this lack of awareness means that the crime of labor trafficking is severely under-identified and under-reported, resulting in fewer crime investigations and prosecutions and no infrastructure for victim services and supports specific to labor trafficking.

In spite of this, labor trafficking is a growing area of concern for investigators, prosecutors, and victim advocates in Minnesota, including the BCA. The *2019 Human Trafficking in Minnesota: A Report to the Minnesota Legislature* noted that during 2017, law enforcement agencies identified 21 labor trafficking victims and service providers identified 394 labor trafficking victims this report and other studies show that these numbers only scratch the surface of the true victimization occurring in Minnesota and throughout the United States, due to significant underreporting.¹ Of the victims identified, 44 percent were adult men and 42 percent were adult women. The victims were disproportionately from communities of color, particularly Asian or Asian American (56%) and Hispanic/Latinx (28%).



Victims were found in many labor sectors including households (housekeeping, nanny), restaurants (40%), construction, and agriculture. While this data reveals fewer labor trafficking investigations and prosecutions than sex trafficking, it shows the need for more systemic response given the high number of victims served in the community, with which this bill aid.

It is for these reasons that the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension voices its strong support of Senate File 2269/House File 2505.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Drew Evans, Superintendent