



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

March 15, 2022

To: Chair Liebling and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee  
RE: HF3599 (Keeler)

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members,

The YMCA of the North provides outreach, emergency shelter, housing, prevention, intervention, and supportive services to more than 9,000 youth and families experiencing homelessness or housing instability, sexual exploitation, or trafficking each year in the state of Minnesota. In 2021, the YMCA Youth and Family Services' outreach team had 7,792 engagements with youth experiencing homelessness/housing instability and/or exploitation and trafficking who were in need of immediate help. Available 365 days a year to connect these youth to caring adults and community resources, the YMCA received an average of 125 calls per month on our Youth Resource Line. Youth and Family Services provides holistic, wrap-around support, focused on increasing participant's self-sufficiency producing long-term, sustainable results.

As a part of Minnesota's Youth Services Network, YMCA Youth and Family Services collaborates with youth serving agencies across the state to deliver a comprehensive and effective continuum of care. Collectively, we leverage our strengths and resources to provide individualized support and services. We partner with our communities to develop and implement effective solutions to end homelessness, exploitation and trafficking for those we serve. We are filling gaps and serving those who are most under-served. We need your partnership and support to continue to meet the increasing needs and create permanent change.

We are thankful for the investments from the state of Minnesota to support youth facing barriers; however, additional resources are needed to fully fund the continuum of services. There are currently 4,876 youth still experiencing homelessness on any given night in Minnesota. Youth make up 51% of the total individuals experiencing homelessness in our state and BIPOC and LGBTQIA+2Spirit youth are far more likely to experience homelessness and/or sexual exploitation and trafficking. Many programs, including the YMCA's programs serving youth experiencing exploitation and trafficking currently have waitlists.

We ask you to please support additional funding to end the exploitation and trafficking of youth in Minnesota through your support of HF3599 (Keeler). Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Pung Michaelson (she/her)  
YMCA Youth and Family Services Executive Director  
612-432-5129 | [lisa.pungmichaelson@ymcamn.org](mailto:lisa.pungmichaelson@ymcamn.org)

**YMCA OF THE NORTH**

651 Nicollet Mall, Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55402  
P 612 371 9622 F 612 371 9967 W [ymcanorth.org](http://ymcanorth.org)