



TURNING LIVES AROUND.

March 28, 2023

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of HF 1858 which would provide additional critical resources for some of the most vulnerable people in our state-youth who are being sex trafficked.

My name is Dan Pfarr and I am the CEO of 180 Degrees. For fifty years, 180 Degrees has provided critical housing and support for 1,400 vulnerable youth, families, and adults across the state of Minnesota. 180 Degrees Brittany's Place is Minnesota's largest program for youth experiencing sex trafficking. We give support to youth experiencing sex trafficking and the expansion and funding for HF 1858 is crucial for us to be able to continue support Minnesota Youth. I am writing this letter in support of HF 1858 which would provide additional critical resources for some of the most vulnerable people in our state-youth who are being sex trafficked.

It goes without saying that Minnesota's children and youth should not be bought and sold for sex. I know it is hard to believe that it happens in our state but it does. The average age of entry into being trafficked is young - between the ages of 12-14.

Sex trafficking is a horrific issue in our state. In 2019 the Minnesota Student Survey found that 5,000 Minnesota 9th and 11th graders have experienced sexual exploitation. This number is an undercount in that it only represents two grade levels and only the youth who happened to be in school at this time and who felt comfortable enough answering the question.

But there is so much hope in our state for victims of trafficking. You helped us pass our Safe Harbor Law back in 2011 which decriminalizes "prostitution" offenses for youth under the age of 18 and provides safe and trauma informed services, shelter and housing programs to help these incredible young people heal and accomplish the goals they have for themselves. We are so grateful for this amazing progress but our youth need more.

On behalf of the Youth Services Network we are asking for an increase of \$9 million for additional street outreach workers, emergency shelter beds and housing, an additional \$9 million for supportive services such as mental health therapy/CD counseling/educational and vocational programs and an additional \$2 million to expand the Regional Navigator Program. All of these investments would provide our state with

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the opportunity to get additional victims of sex trafficking into safe and supportive environments where they can heal and accomplish their goals.

Please use some of the surplus to invest in their safety and futures and support of HF 1858.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan F. Pfarr'.

Dan Pfarr
Chief Executive Officer

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