

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The MN Coalition for the Homeless (MCH) is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

The mission of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless is to generate policies, community support, and local resources for housing and services to end homelessness in Minnesota. Our coalition works to ensure statewide housing, stability and economic security. With about 70 member organizations across Minnesota, we work to advance solutions that result in housing stability for all Minnesotans.

MCH recognizes that youth homelessness is a very real issue within our state and we are so grateful that the House has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. Shelter Saves Lives and Housing Ends Homelessness but without resources, neither of these goals will be accomplished. The Homeless Youth Act is the State's best program in addressing a variety of factors that cause youth homelessness. It provides flexibility in how organizations can best respond to the individual needs of each youth they serve.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and those who thank you all so much!

Sincerely,

Matt Traynor

Interim Executive Director & Director of Advocacy
MN Coalition for the Homeless



March 25, 2022

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Avenues for Youth is writing to express our strong support for the Homeless Youth Act bill. We greatly appreciate all previous investments in the Homeless Youth Act and in this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

At Avenues we partner with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams. We provide shelter and short-term housing, along with holistic supports, to more than 300 young people every year. Sadly, our programs are always full. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). Avenues for Youth, along with the YSN, has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and the amounts outlined in this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases lifesaving impact.

Youth homelessness is a very real issue in our state and we are grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this. On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth whose family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves. We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act in the current bills.

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Meerse", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Katherine Meerse
Executive Director



April 3rd, 2025

RE: HF2068 Homeless Youth Act Appropriation

Chair Noor, Chair Schomacker, and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative to express our strong support for Rep. Keeler's bill, HF2068, which appropriates funding for the Homeless Youth Act Grants. These grants provide essential flexible funding for youth who have experienced homelessness.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is a nonprofit housing provider and developer with 24 buildings that offer affordable homes to over 1,200 people. We primarily operate supportive housing, which provides safe, affordable, and stable housing with on-site services for the most vulnerable Minnesotans who have experienced homelessness.

Beacon operates three supportive housing buildings dedicated to youth. In partnership with service providers, we create a home for youth who have experienced homelessness with age-appropriate, wrap-around services. With a dedicated case manager, youth can be referred to for mental health/chemical dependency support and receive skill building and education/job coaching.

The lives of 136 residents have been transformed due to the Homeless Youth Act, which provides flexible grants to support these services. These three buildings are just one example of the good work that the Homeless Youth Act enables across the state

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative urges the committee to pass HF2068, and fund the Homeless Youth Act this year.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin Helvick Anderson".

Benjamin Helvick Anderson
VP of Policy and Organizing
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative



Evergreen
Youth & Family Services
Strengthening Youth. Preserving Families.

March 26, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Evergreen Youth & Family Services is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 5293. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state – youth experiencing homelessness.

Evergreen Youth & Family Services is located in the city of Bemidji, a rural and remote area of northern Minnesota. For nearly 48 years, we've supported youth and families facing homelessness, victim survivors of sex trafficking, those facing mental health challenges, and youth involved in foster care and the juvenile justice system. We provide emergency shelter, housing, and a variety of services for youth. Having experienced the effects of severe trauma firsthand, we're dedicated to offering the resources and care youth need daily to find hope, healing, and a way forward. We're also a part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). Together, we've been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life-changing, and in many cases lifesaving impact.

Youth homelessness is a very real issue within our state and we are so grateful that the House and Senate have recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 5293! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These young people become homeless for various reasons. We see youth whose families can't afford housing for everyone, causing older youth to seek alternative housing, youth who have been rejected by their families because of their lifestyle choices, youth who have been abused or neglected, and youth who fall through the cracks or age out of the foster care system, among other situations. We see youth who are then forced to make horrific decisions to survive. Some youth have had to live in a car, couch hop with friends, go between the library and other public places, find an abandoned building or house to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support to accomplish the goals they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

Thank you for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and for those of us who are advocating for them.

Sincerely,



Ebony Warren, Executive Director



102 W. 1st Street
Duluth, MN 55802

OFFICE (218) 722-7431
FAX (218) 722-0850

LIFEHOUSEDULUTH.ORG

3/28/25

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Life House is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 5293. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

Life House is a front-line service provider of a comprehensive wraparound services and housing for youth and young families experiencing homelessness including those who are victim survivors of sex trafficking and/or who are involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. Each year we serve over 800 youth, 80% of whom have experienced homelessness and 99% of whom are low-extremely low income. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). Life House along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases life saving impact.

Youth homelessness is a very real issues within our state and we are so grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 5293! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth who's family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and those who-thank you all so much!

Sincerely,

Amber Sadowski
Executive Director

Here today. Here tomorrow.

03/25/2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

MoveFwd is writing to express our strong support for **HF 2068/SF 5293**. We deeply appreciate past investments in the **Homeless Youth Act** and are grateful for the proposed **\$14 million increase** over the next biennium. These funds will have a life-changing and, in many cases, life-saving impact on youth experiencing homelessness.

As the **only frontline service provider in the west metro suburbs** ensuring youth have access to a **continuum of support**, MoveFwd offers school and street-based outreach, a drop-in center, and housing for youth and young families. We serve those who are survivors of sex trafficking and/or involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems. MoveFwd is proud to be part of the **Youth Services Network (YSN)**, advocating statewide to end youth homelessness and sex trafficking.

On any given night, **4,872 unaccompanied youth** experience homelessness in Minnesota. While this crisis exists statewide, it is particularly **overlooked in suburban areas**, where resources are limited, leading to **prolonged homelessness and increased risks**. Youth may be kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, come from families unable to afford adequate housing, or age out of foster care without support. Many are forced to make devastating choices — living in cars, shelters, or unsafe spaces, or even trading sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota's children and youth deserve **safe, stable housing** and the opportunity to achieve their goals. Supporting the allocations for the **Homeless Youth Act** and **Safe Harbor in HF 2068 and SF 5293** is a crucial step in making that a reality.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting youth experiencing homelessness in our state.

Sincerely,

Angela Gauthier

Angela Gauthier, LMFT
Executive Director



2200 W. Old Shakopee Rd.
Bloomington, MN 55431
www.oasisforyouth.org
952-512-2061

March 28, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Oasis for Youth is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 2593. We greatly appreciate all the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support some of the most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

Oasis for Youth is a community organization based in Bloomington that provides a network of resources for youth and young families experiencing or at risk of housing instability and homelessness. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). Oasis for Youth along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for several years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases lifesaving impact.

Youth homelessness is a critical issue within our state, and we are so grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 2593. On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth whose family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 2593!

We are so grateful for your incredible support of and continued commitment to all people experiencing homelessness in our state. Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jess Nelson", written over a horizontal line.

Jess Nelson
Executive Director
Oasis for Youth

April 2, 2025

Co-Chairs Schomacker and Noor and Members of the Human Services Finance and Policy committee,

OutFront Minnesota is our state's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy organization and we write in support of HF 2608 - appropriating money for Homeless Youth Act grants.

We all deserve housing, safety, and support in the communities we call home.

Unfortunately, 2SLGBTQIA+ populations experience homelessness at heightened rates compared with their peers. Data from the 2022 US Trans Survey showed that "one-third (30%) of [transgender] respondents had experienced homelessness in their lifetime" and these rates are heightened where individuals hold multiply marginalized identities - the Trevor Project's survey of youth and young people demonstrated that "44% of Native/Indigenous LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness or housing instability at some point in their life."

Rates in Minnesota are increasing, based on data from the US 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report - which reported a 9.6% increase in all populations experiencing homelessness in our state.

Our organization is not a recipient of Homeless Youth Act grants but these are critical concerns for our communities, and critical investments in *all* of our state's communities. Early interventions and support help to deliver improved outcomes and support for those in need - and these grants provide important services to vulnerable populations. Now is not the time to let up on this support.

We encourage your support for HF 2608, and for our state's continued investment in supporting those who are currently unhoused or at-risk.

Sincerely,

Kat Rohn
Executive Director
OutFront Minnesota.

March 28, 2025



Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Bridge for Youth is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 5293. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

The Bridge for Youth is a front line service provider of a continuum of services, emergency shelter and housing for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, who are victim survivors of sex trafficking and/or who are involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). The Bridge for Youth along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases life saving impact.

Youth homelessness is a very real issues within our state and we are so grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 5293! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth who's family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

Should you like to connect regarding the impact of this legislation, I welcome your call or email at 612-508-1279 or l.mears@bridgeforyouth.org. We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and those who-thank you all so much!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Mears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Mears, President

The Bridge for Youth

3/26/25

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Family Partnership (TFP) is writing to express our strong support for HF 2707 and the aligning Senate bill. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state – children and youth who have been victims of sex trafficking.

TFP is a front line service provider of a continuum of services supporting families, including PRIDE, an anti-sex trafficking program providing holistic support services for sexually exploited individuals and families. Although you have all helped us to make incredible progress in the fight to end sex trafficking in our state – we do need additional resources to help the number of children being sex trafficked across our state. HF 2707 would provide critically needed funding to help more victims out of sex trafficking by helping to expand our state's services, emergency shelter and housing for victims.

Sex trafficking are very real issues within our state! In 2022 the Minnesota Student Survey found that at least 4,800 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 on a school survey. Another very disturbing reality is that these victims of sex trafficking are young-the average age of entry is between 12 and 14 and we see this within the youth we work with every day.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to get out of trafficking, heal and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves. And it goes without saying that none of our state's children should be bought and sold for sex for someone else's profit. We have an incredible opportunity to reduce sex trafficking in our state by supporting HF 2707 and the aligned Senate bill. We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people in our state and those who have been victims of sex trafficking -thank you all so much!

Sincerely,



Julie Bluhm, Interim CEO



March 25, 2025

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Link is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 5293. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

The Link is a front line service provider of a continuum of services, emergency shelter and housing for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, who are victim survivors of sex trafficking and/or who are involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). The Link along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases life saving impact.

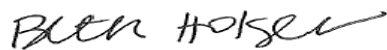
Youth homelessness is a very real issues within our state and we are so grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 5293! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth who's family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in

an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and those who-thank you all so much!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Holger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth Holger
CEO



3/28/25

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The YMCA of the North strongly supports **HF 2068/SF 5293** and appreciates the continued investments in the Homeless Youth Act, as well as the critical additional funding in this bill to support Minnesota's most vulnerable—youth experiencing homelessness.

As a frontline provider, the YMCA offers emergency shelter, housing, and supportive services for youth and young families facing homelessness, including survivors of sex trafficking and those involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. We are proud to partner with the Youth Services Network (YSN) in advocating to end youth homelessness and sex trafficking. The proposed \$14 million increase for the Homeless Youth Act over the next biennium would have a life-changing—and often life-saving—impact on those we serve.

Youth homelessness is a pressing issue in Minnesota, and we are grateful that the House and Senate have prioritized it through HF 2068/SF 5293. On any given night, 4,872 unaccompanied youth experience homelessness. These young people become homeless for many reasons—whether due to family rejection (particularly LGBTQ+ youth), economic hardship, aging out of foster care, or systemic gaps. Without stable housing, many are forced into dangerous situations, including sleeping in cars, encampments, or abandoned buildings, or even trading sex for shelter.

Every Minnesota youth deserves a safe, stable home and the support to achieve their goals. By supporting the funding levels for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor in this bill, we have a powerful opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking across our state.

Thank you for your tireless commitment to supporting all individuals experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. Your leadership makes a profound difference!

Sincerely,

Matthew Smith, Executive Director YMCA Youth and Family Services



March 26th, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

YouthLink is writing to express our strong support for HF 2068/SF 5293. We greatly appreciate all of the investments within the past for the Homeless Youth Act and within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state - youth experiencing homelessness.

For 45+ years, YouthLink has provided pathways to safety and stability for 16–24-year-old Youth and young adults who are unsheltered or precariously housed, along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and the amounts outlined within this bill for the Homeless Youth Act (a \$14 million increase over the next biennium) would make a life changing and in many cases lifesaving impact.

Youth homelessness is a very real issues within our state and we are so grateful that the House and Senate has recognized this within the introduction of HF 2068 and SF 5293! On any given night there are 4,872 unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness. These are young people who become homeless due to many reasons-we see youth who are kicked out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, youth whose family can't afford housing large enough for the whole family so the older youth are finding alternative housing; youth who are falling through the cracks or aging out of our foster care system and more. We see youth who are then forced to make horrible decisions to survive-some having to live in a car, go between libraries and public transportation, live in an encampment, find a doorway of a building or an abandoned building to live out of, or trade sex for a place to sleep.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to live and support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves! We have an incredible opportunity to reduce youth homelessness and sex trafficking in our state by supporting the amounts allocated for the Homeless Youth Act and Safe Harbor within HF 2068 and SF 5293!

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state and those who-
thank you all so much!

Sincerely,

Rich Melzer

CEO, YouthLinkMN – melzer@youthlinkmn.org