

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Link 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.

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 2707! 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 Safe Harbor program is unfortunately a program that is needed to ensure youth who have been trafficked can still lead a life of their choosing, rather than being limited to the negative impacts of the trauma they've gone through.

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,

Matt Traynor

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



March 25, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Avenues for Youth is writing to express our strong support for HF 2707 and the aligning Senate bill. These bills provide critically needed additional funds to support those most vulnerable in our state – children and youth who have been victims of sex trafficking.

At Avenues, we partner with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams. We do this by providing shelter and short-term housing for youth and young families experiencing homelessness. Many of the youth we support are victim survivors of sex trafficking. We are part of a broader state-wide coalition of youth service providers called the Youth Services Network (YSN). Avenues, along with the YSN, has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for a number of years and we appreciate the incredible bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor Law and response! You have helped us to make incredible progress in the fight to end sex trafficking in our state – AND we 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 is a very real issue 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. We at Avenues partner closely with Safe Harbor funded grantees in the state. Avenues and our partners have waiting lists for our programs and housing due to lack of resources to serve the number of victims that request help. Another 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. 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Katherine Meerse", written over a set of three horizontal purple lines.

Katherine Meerse
Executive Director



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 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.

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 are 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). Evergreen Youth & Family Services, along with the YSN has been advocating towards ending youth homelessness and sex trafficking for years and we appreciate the incredible bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor Law and response! 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 is a very real issue 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. Evergreen Youth & Family Services is just one of the Safe Harbor funded grantees in the state providing emergency shelter, housing support, food and clothing, and safe and stable adults to support young people through their healing journey. Each year we see hundreds of youth who have been sexually exploited or trafficked or those who are at a high risk of falling into these horrific situations. Another very disturbing reality is that these victims of sex trafficking are young – the average age of entry is between 12 and 14.

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! 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 Minnesota by supporting HF 2707 and the aligned Senate bill. Thank you for your support of all people in our state and those who've been victims of sex trafficking!

Sincerely,

Ebony Warren, Executive Director



LIFE HOUSE

102 W. 1st Street
Duluth, MN 55802

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

LIFEHOUSEDULUTH.ORG

March 28, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Life House 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.

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. 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 we appreciate the incredible bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor Law and response! 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. We at Life House are just one of the Safe Harbor funded grantees in the state – providing free mental health care, a drop-in youth center, housing, and education and employment services. We currently have 62 safe harbor youth enrolled in our programs, 32% of whom are pregnant or parenting and 39% of whom identified as Alaskan Native/Native American/Pacific Islander; and in 2024, our Sol House program provided an average of 240 bed nights per youth. Another very disturbing reality is that these victims of sex trafficking are young-the average age of entry is between 12 and 14.

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,

Amber Sadowski
Executive Director

Here today. Here tomorrow.

March 25, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

MoveFwd is writing to express our strong support for **HF 2707** and its companion Senate bill. We deeply appreciate the investments proposed in this legislation, providing critical resources for children and youth who have been victims of sex trafficking.

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 survivors of sex trafficking and youth involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems. Alongside our **Youth Services Network (YSN)** partners, we continue advocating to end youth homelessness and sex trafficking.

While Minnesota has made significant progress through the **Safe Harbor Law and response**, the need remains urgent. **HF 2707** would provide essential funding to expand our state's services, emergency shelter, and housing for victims of sex trafficking.

The issue is undeniable. In 2022, the **Minnesota Student Survey** reported that at least **4,800 Minnesota 9th and 11th graders** experienced sexual exploitation – an undercount that excludes many youth not in school or unwilling to disclose their experiences. Resources are stretched thin, with Safe Harbor-funded programs facing waitlists due to insufficient capacity. Tragically, the **average age of entry into sex trafficking is just 12 to 14 years old**, a heartbreaking reality we witness firsthand.

Minnesota's children and youth deserve a **safe, stable place to heal** and pursue their goals. No child in our state should ever be bought and sold for someone else's profit. By supporting **HF 2707** and the companion Senate bill, we have a powerful opportunity to reduce sex trafficking and provide vital support to survivors.

Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our state.

Sincerely,



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 2707/SF 3001. We greatly appreciate all the investments within this bill that provide critically needed additional funds to support some of the most vulnerable in our state – children and youth who have been victims of sex trafficking.

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, including youth who are victim survivors of sex trafficking. 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. We appreciate the strong bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor law, and because of this, we have made incredible progress. There remains work to be done 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 further expanding our state's services, emergency shelter and housing for victims.

Sex trafficking is a critical issue within our state. In 2022 the Minnesota Student Survey found that at least 4,800 Minnesota 9th and 11th graders have experienced sexual exploitation, and this number represents only a sliver of all youth impacted by sex trafficking across our state. Unfortunately, it is the reality that victims of sex trafficking in our state are very young, often entering between the ages of 12 and 14. At Oasis for Youth, we rely on the invaluable network of Safe Harbor programs to support our youth who are experiencing sex trafficking, but because the volume of youth in need of these resources exceeds what is available, there is often a waitlist to access these critical interventions.

Minnesota children and youth deserve a safe and stable place to get out of trafficking, to heal and get support with accomplishing the goals that they have for themselves. None of our 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 SF 3001. Thank you for your support of and continued commitment to safety and well-being of children and youth in our state.

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 2707 - funding for Minnesota's safe harbor services.

Safe Harbor services are an essential part of our state's response to addressing and preventing trafficking - and to supporting at risk youth and young adults who need our support.

LGBTQ+ populations are uniquely at-risk for trafficking - due to a complex combination of factors that include lack of family support, increased rates of homelessness and related experience that contribute to vulnerability, and real and perceived concerns around accessing supportive services or reporting harm.

Having culturally responsive, engaged programs engaging with our communities is critical to addressing the ongoing challenges facing our state's youth and young people.

The work of changing culture and structures that leave communities vulnerable to trafficking is ongoing; and these investments represent an important and continuing commitment from our state. We encourage your support for HF 2707, and the continued investment of our state's resources into these important and underresourced programs.

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 2707 and the aligning Senate bill. We greatly appreciate all 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.

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 we appreciate the incredible bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor Law and response! 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. We support our colleagues at peer organizations that are Safe Harbor funded grantees in the state – providing services, shelter and housing for our state and help thousands of unduplicated sex trafficking victims each year and have waiting lists for our programs and housing due to lack of resources to serve the number of victims that request our help. 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,



President, The Bridge for Youth



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 2707 and SF 3001. 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.

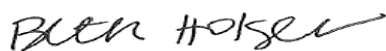
The Link is a front line service provider of a continuum of services, emergency shelter and housing for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, who are victim survivors of sex trafficking and/or who are involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. We are part of a broader state-wide 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 we appreciate the incredible bipartisan support for victims of sex trafficking and our Safe Harbor Law and response! 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. We at The Link are just one of the Safe Harbor funded grantees in the state – provided services, shelter and housing for our state and help between 160 and 200

unduplicated sex trafficking victims each year and have waiting lists for our programs and housing due to lack of resources to serve the number of victims that request our help. 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 SF 3001. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Holger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Beth" and last name "Holger" clearly distinguishable.

Beth Holger
CEO

3/28/25

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The YMCA of the North **strongly supports HF 2707** and its aligned Senate bill. We deeply appreciate the proposed investments in this legislation, which will provide critically needed funding to support some of Minnesota's most vulnerable—children and youth who have survived sex trafficking.

As a frontline service provider, the YMCA offers emergency shelter, housing, and supportive services for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, including survivors of sex trafficking and those involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. As part of the Youth Services Network (YSN), we have worked for years alongside a statewide coalition to end youth homelessness and sex trafficking. While Minnesota has made tremendous progress through bipartisan support of the Safe Harbor Law, more resources are urgently needed to address the alarming number of children being trafficked across our state. HF 2707 would provide essential funding to expand services, emergency shelter, and housing for victims—helping more young people escape exploitation and rebuild their lives.

Sex trafficking remains a devastating reality in Minnesota. The 2022 Minnesota Student Survey found that at least 4,800 ninth and 11th graders had experienced sexual exploitation—and this is likely an undercount, as it only reflects two grade levels and those comfortable disclosing on a school survey. As one of the state's Safe Harbor-funded grantees, the YMCA serves more than 150 trafficking victims annually, yet waitlists persist due to limited resources. Equally distressing is the fact that victims are increasingly young—the average age of entry into trafficking is just 12 to 14, a trend we witness daily in our work.

Minnesota's children deserve safety, stability, and the chance to heal. No child should ever be bought or sold for profit. By supporting HF 2707 and its Senate counterpart, we have a powerful opportunity to combat trafficking and provide survivors with the support they need to thrive.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to protecting Minnesota's youth and supporting victims of sex trafficking. Your leadership saves lives.

Sincerely,



Matthew Smith, Executive Director YMCA Youth and Family Services

April 1, 2025

Women's Foundation of Minnesota Supports SF 3001/HF 2707

Minnesota House Human Services Finance and Policy committee members,

As the President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, I am writing to express our support for HF 2707, a bill that would appropriate money for sexually exploited youth for Safe Harbor shelter and housing. For over 40 years, the Women's Foundation has invested more than \$54 million in organizations across the state, and advanced policies to create a state where women, girls, and their families can thrive. The Women's Foundation advocated for the original 2011 Safe Harbor legislation and paid the \$12,000 fiscal note that helped enable its passage. Almost a decade and a half later, we're here again to advocate for this funding.

In the 2017 report we funded, [Mapping the Demand: Sex Buyers in the State of Minnesota](#), we know that youth exploitation is a crisis happening in [all of our communities](#). A 2019 study on Safe Harbor found that the vast majority of participants were female, six percent were male, and three percent were transgender or gender-expansive. The National Human Trafficking Hotline received 335 calls from Minnesotans in 2021. A total of 98 cases were identified with 148 victims. Seventy-seven percent of cases involved sex trafficking. Responses to a question in the Minnesota Student Survey also funded by our organization revealed that almost two percent of Minnesota eleventh grade girls and five percent of nonbinary and transgender students surveyed in Minnesota public schools reported having traded sexual activity to receive money, food, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, or anything else.

Youth exploitation can have far-reaching impacts on housing. Our [2024 Status of Women and Girls+ report](#) found 42 percent of unhoused Minnesota women experienced sexual abuse as a child. Nationwide, approximately one in three homeless women experienced childhood sexual trauma. Youth in Minnesota who have survived sexual exploitation are often trapped in violent cycles unless critical interventions are made. Without expanded outreach services, too many will find themselves in unstable housing or unhoused, struggling with mental health issues including addiction, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder or even back in the hands of those who are exploiting them. Survivors, and those at risk of exploitation, need safe housing, care, respect and dignity to rebuild their lives. We appreciate the work of Representative Keeler and the many co-authors of HF 2707 for bringing this bill forward and we urge you to support the crucial funding in HF 2707.



Gloria Perez
President & CEO