



February 2, 2023

To: Members of the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee

Re: **HF1048**

Dear Chair Moller and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share **Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's (LSS) support of HF1048**. Increased investment in Youth Invention Programs will strengthen services to youth facing the highest risks for involvement in the juvenile justice system. LSS is a provider of essential services across all 87 counties with more than 2,400 employees who serve one in 65 Minnesotans every year. We are committed to innovative, person-centered service delivery that promotes resilience and long-term stability for people in all stages of life.

YIP funding supports the LSS STEAM Freedom School, an intensive, six-week summer program with a focus on positive decision-making, setting goals, and finding solutions to real-life problems. In the summer of 2022, YIP funding helped support 30 Freedom School scholars in a high intensity reading curriculum and STEAM learning activities. During the summer months youth face increased vulnerability to reading slumps, high-risk behaviors, peer pressure, and lack of structured and positive activities. YIP funding helps LSS keep youth engaged as learners and as positive community members.

We are thankful for continued investments in supporting youth statewide. Unfortunately, due to several factors, the need is much greater than currently available resources. Increasing investment in YIP will help more youth feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to confront and cope with past traumas. LSS and other service providers would be able to strengthen services for youth that build on their assets and connect them with supportive adults.

We believe youth are resilient, full of hope and potential. They're able to succeed in life despite their histories of trauma. **Please support HF1048 and increase investment in YIP**. This is critical to improve outcomes for youth and the communities in which they live.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity. Please contact Erin Sutton, LSS' Senior Director of Advocacy, at erin.sutton@lssmn.org if we may provide further information on this deeply important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen P. Kingsley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Kingsley
Sr. Director
LSS Youth and Family Services