

Comprehensive Services Needed for Child Sex Trafficking Victims

WE URGE YOUR SUPPORT FOR legislation that unequivocally recognizes that minors engaged in commercial sex are sex trafficking victims not to be arrested **AND** a budget that provides funding to provide shelter, health care and immediate and long-term services to enable children to recover from the trauma of being trafficked.

Dane County Sex Trafficking Survivor Story — Age of entry 15: *I was in school at East High School - I was living on the south side with my Aunt - but was going to East because I went there before I moved. My Aunt was trading me for sex for drugs. Nobody knew in school. I was already an abused child taken out of my mother's home. I didn't want to tell them - I didn't want to get my Aunt in trouble. I was a CHIPS kid. I had a social worker. When I was a runaway at 16 - I slept on the park bench in a park on East Wash - I just stayed up all night until I fell asleep and then woke up when it was daylight. If there was a program to help me I wouldn't have had to run away.*

2015 WI Department of Children and Families Initial Response to Federal 2014 Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act: Trends from Stakeholder Consultations

- Residential and non-residential, community-based services are an important. Non-residential community-based options provide support to victims seeking assistance who are not involved in the “system” or have exited the “system”. WI has very limited capacity in both residential and community-based services. Specialized services for WI sex trafficked youth range from limited to entirely lacking.
- When services are available, they frequently are fragmented and often difficult for victims to access due to lack of effective coordination and communication across systems and organizations.
- Victims may be identified in numerous ways and need multiple points through which they can access support and assistance.
- Given the coercive, manipulative and abusive relationships victims have experienced, it takes considerable skill and time for a case manager or service provider to establish trust.

Dane County Sex Trafficking Survivor Story — Age of entry 14: *By the time I was 13, I had been in a group home where I had gotten into a fight with another girl because I wasn't used to living in a group home. I also had been in a foster home. I didn't like the home. Nobody ever asked me why are you doing this? They need to look a little bit deeper into what's going on with kids rather than sending them from place to place without asking why. Honestly, it's a messed up system - they don't care where we go and how we live our lives. There needs to be places for young girls to go that actually work on specific things like therapy and trauma with people who have experienced the same thing so you know that you are not alone, and where you are not just a troubled teen who is naughty or bad. They can teach how to transition into being an adult - how to handle money, pay bills - the things their parents should have been teaching them.*

WE URGE YOUR SUPPORT FOR:

- Re-instating the DCF 2017-19 budget request for \$5.8 million (FY18) and \$6.5 million (FY19) to meet the cost-to-continue of Act 367 for services and treatment costs for children and youth who have been or are at risk of being sex trafficked. The Governor purposes \$2 million in each year. If we are responsible for preventing child sex trafficking, we are also responsible for supporting those we fail to protect.
- LRB 687 Sexually Exploited Children Act to amend 944.30 (1m) (intro.) and 944.30 (2m) of the statutes stipulating that a person who is under the age of 18 may not be prosecuted for committing an act of prostitution. It also eliminates the option under current law in cases where a person under the age of 18 has committed an act of prostitution for a court to enter a consent decree under the Juvenile Justice Code. Authored by Representative Jill Billings.

