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April 1, 2025

Dear Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives,

I am writing this letter in strong opposition to HF 2532 which would eliminate the Community Crime and Violence Prevention Account.

These funds are used to provide services and support for Minnesotans who have been victims of horrific crimes. These funds literally help to provide safety, support and in many cases help to save the lives of residents of our state – including minor children – who have had to live through horrific experiences such as attempted murder, sexual assault, child abuse, sex trafficking and more. We understand that the budget decisions are difficult – however feel strongly that eliminating the services for victims of horrific crimes in our state that help to save lives, heal lives – is not what the people of Minnesota would want along with all of us at The Link.

I have had the honor and privilege to work with children who are experiencing homelessness, sex trafficking and who have been victims of child abuse and other crimes for over 20 years. I am the CEO of The Link which is a nonprofit that provides crisis intervention services, supportive services, emergency shelter and housing for children who have been sex trafficked, are experiencing homelessness and/or who are involved in our child protection or juvenile justice systems.

The Link receives a \$250,000 grant from the Community Crime and Violence Prevention Account. We utilize these funds in combination with contributions from corporate and family foundations, individual donors, faith based organizations and funding from Safe Harbor to provide emergency shelter, school, medical care, mental health therapy and more for children who have been sex trafficked (between the ages of 12 and 17). If we lost this \$250,000 of funding (which is 1/3 of our shelter's annual operating budget) we would have to lay off shelter staff and cut down the numbers of children that we could accept into our shelter. We would have to turn away children who have been sex trafficked in our state that are referred to us by our law enforcement partners, child protection system, schools and community partners. It would be devastating to those children and to us as we are one of the few emergency shelters in our state for victims of sex trafficking.

I ask you to think of these children who are victims of crime along with the adult victims and all who would be left without help at the worst times of their lives if these funds were cut. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Holger

CEO of The Link