

2023 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2341

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
2/13/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

3:18 PM **Madam Chair Lee** called the hearing to order. **Senators Lee, Cleary, Clemens, K. Roers, Weston, Hogan** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Youth services
- Residential programs
- Sexual exploited population
- Human trafficking
- Animal treatment
- Abuse and neglect

3:19 PM **Senator K. Roers** introduced SB 2341 in favor verbally.

3:19 PM **Christopher Dodson, Executive Director, North Dakota Catholic Conference**, testified in favor. #20612.

3:22 PM **Laura Feldmann, Executive Director, Home on the Range** testified in favor. #20621, 20622.

3:35 PM **Kimberly Jacobson, Zone Director, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone**, testified in favor. #20553.

3:39 PM **Cory Pedersen, Director of the Children and Family Section, North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services**, testified neutral. #20664.

3:56 PM **Emily Schwartz, Director, North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force**, testified in favor verbally.

4:04 PM **Christina Sambo, representing Youth Works**, testified in favor verbally.

4:08 PM **Senator Lee** closed the hearing.

4:09 PM **Senator Lee** reconvened hearing.

4:10 PM **Cory Pedersen**, provided additional information, verbally.

Senate Human Services Committee

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Additional written testimony:

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action in favor #20558

Lisa Giese, Foster Care Supervisor, Roughrider North Human Service Zone in favor #20643

4:13 PM **Madam Chair Lee** closed the hearing.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
2/14/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

9:22 AM **Madam Chair Lee** called the meeting to order. **Senators Lee, Cleary, Clemens, K. Roers, Weston, Hogan** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Reporting
- Study
- Implement

Senator Hogan discussed and updated information on SB verbally.

9:28 AM Madam Chair Lee closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
2/15/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

10:24 AM **Madam Chair Lee** called the meeting to order. **Senators Lee, Cleary, Clemens, K. Roers, Weston, Hogan** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Standard framework
- Study
- Collaboration
- Office of Attorney General

Senator Lee asks for discussion.

Senator Hogan proposed an Amendment #20882.

Senator Hogan moves to adopt amendment LC 23.1054.01001.

Senator K. Roers seconded.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator K. Roers moves **DO PASS** as **AMENDED**.

Senator Hogan seconded.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

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Senator K. Roers will carry SB 2341.

10:30 AM **Madam Chair** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

February 15, 2023

DR
172
2-15-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2341

Page 1, line 19, remove ""Certified family foster home for children" means an occupied private residence in which foster care for children is regularly provided by the owner or lessee of the residence to no more than three children, unless the department approves otherwise.

5."

Page 1, line 23, remove the overstrike over "5."

Page 1, line 23, remove "6."

Page 1, line 24, remove "certified family foster home for children."

Page 2, line 3, remove the overstrike over "6."

Page 2, line 3, remove "7."

Page 2, line 6, remove the overstrike over "7."

Page 2, line 6, remove "8."

Page 2, line 10, remove the overstrike over "8."

Page 2, line 10, remove "9."

Page 2, line 17, remove ", certified."

Page 2, line 19, remove the overstrike over "9."

Page 2, line 19, remove "10."

Page 2, line 23, remove the overstrike over "10."

Page 2, line 23, remove "11."

Page 3, line 1, remove the overstrike over "11."

Page 3, line 1, remove "12."

Page 3, line 3, replace "13." with "12."

Page 3, line 6, replace "14." with "13."

Page 3, after line 7, insert:

**"SECTION 2. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -
STANDARD FRAMEWORK OF SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. During the 2023-24 interim, the department of health and human services shall study and implement, in collaboration with other stakeholders, a standard framework for youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking, which includes residential treatment.

2. The department of health and human services shall collaborate with other stakeholders, including the children and family services section of the department of health and human services, the office of the attorney general, and the human trafficking task force.
3. Before January 2, 2024, the department of health and human services shall report its findings and recommendations to the interim human services committee."

DR
282
2-15-23

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2341: Human Services Committee (Sen. Lee, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2341 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Page 1, line 19, remove ""Certified family foster home for children" means an occupied private residence in which foster care for children is regularly provided by the owner or lessee of the residence to no more than three children, unless the department approves otherwise.

5."

Page 1, line 23, remove the overstrike over "5:"

Page 1, line 23, remove "6."

Page 1, line 24, remove "certified family foster home for children."

Page 2, line 3, remove the overstrike over "6:"

Page 2, line 3, remove "7."

Page 2, line 6, remove the overstrike over "7:"

Page 2, line 6, remove "8."

Page 2, line 10, remove the overstrike over "8:"

Page 2, line 10, remove "9."

Page 2, line 17, remove ". certified."

Page 2, line 19, remove the overstrike over "9:"

Page 2, line 19, remove "10."

Page 2, line 23, remove the overstrike over "40:"

Page 2, line 23, remove "11."

Page 3, line 1, remove the overstrike over "44:"

Page 3, line 1, remove "12."

Page 3, line 3, replace "13." with "12."

Page 3, line 6, replace "14." with "13."

Page 3, after line 7, insert:

**"SECTION 2. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -
STANDARD FRAMEWORK OF SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING - REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.**

1. During the 2023-24 interim, the department of health and human services shall study and implement, in collaboration with other stakeholders, a standard framework for youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking, which includes residential treatment.

2. The department of health and human services shall collaborate with other stakeholders, including the children and family services section of the department of health and human services, the office of the attorney general, and the human trafficking task force.
3. Before January 2, 2024, the department of health and human services shall report its findings and recommendations to the interim human services committee."

Renumber accordingly

2023 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2341

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
3/6/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 3:12 PM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, and Gretchen Dobervich present. Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby and Rep. Jayme Davis not present.

Discussion Topics:

- Survivors of human trafficking
- Withdrawal from substances
- Shelter settings
- Specialized facilities
- Vulnerable individuals
- Traumatic experiences

Sen. Roers introduced SB 2341, speaking in support.

Christopher Dodson, Executive Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference, supportive testimony (#22244).

Christina Sanbor, lobbyist on behalf of Youthworks, spoke in support and introduced Amy Boyd.

Amy Boyd, Anti-Trafficking Program Manager for Youthworks, supportive testimony (#22250).

Cody Pederson, Director of the Children and Family Services Section with the Department of Health and Human Services, opposition testimony (#22233).

Dennis Meier, Director for the Three River Human Service Zone, opposition testimony (#22052).

Cory Pederson, Director of the Children and Family Services Section with the Department of Health and Human Services, answered questions from the committee.

Additional written testimony:

Laura Feldmann, LCSW, Executive Director for Home on the Range, supportive testimony (#22007) (#22008).

House Human Services Committee

SB 2341

3/6/2023

Page 2

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director for the North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action, supportive testimony (#22087).

Sgt. Mike Bolme, investigator for the Bismarck Police Department, supportive testimony (#22160).

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 3:41 PM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
3/28/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, and Gretchen Dobervich present. Reps. Clayton Fegley and Jayme Davis not present.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee work
- Fiscal note
- Suspicion of trafficking

Chairman Weisz called for a discussion on SB 2341 and the fiscal note.

Cory Pederson, Director for Child Services, answered questions from the committee.

Rep. Porter moved a do not pass on SB 2341.

Seconded by Rep. Kiefert.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	N
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	AB
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	N
Representative Clayton Fegley	AB
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	N
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Brandon Prichard	N
Representative Karen M. Rohr	N

Motion carries 7-5-2.

House Human Services Committee

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3/28/2023

Page 2

Carried by Rep. Porter.

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 9:58 AM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk

Reconsidered SB 2341 on 4-3-2023.

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
4/3/2023

Relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth.

Chairman Weisz called the meeting to order at 3:19 PM.

Chairman Robin Weisz, Vice Chairman Matthew Ruby, Reps. Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Dawson Holle, Dwight Kiefert, Carrie McLeod, Todd Porter, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, Jayme Davis, and Gretchen Dobervich present. Rep. Carrie McLeod not present.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee work
- Reconsideration
- Amendments

Vice Chairman Ruby moved to reconsider the committee's previous actions.

Seconded by Rep. Beltz.

Motion carries by voice vote.

Chairman Weisz called for a discussion on SB 2341.

Rep. Frelich moved to adopt amendment to SB 2341 to take out all Section 2 and leave "shall consider a study".

Seconded by Rep. Anderson.

Motion withdrawn.

Rep. Frelich moved to adopt amendment to SB 2341 with # 23.1054.02001

Seconded by Rep. Anderson.

Motion carries by voice vote.

Rep. Frelich moved a do pass as amended to SB 2341.

Seconded by Rep. Anderson.

Roll Call Vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Carrie McLeod	AB
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Brandon Prichard	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y

Motion carries 13-0-1.

Carried by Rep. Frelich.

Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 3:26 PM.

Phillip Jacobs, Committee Clerk

April 3, 2023

4/3/23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2341

Page 1, line 1, remove "amend and reenact section 50-11-00.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 2, replace "relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth" with "provide for a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report"

Page 1, remove lines 4 through 22

Page 2, remove lines 1 through 30

Page 3, remove lines 1 through 5

Page 3, line 18, replace "interim human services committee" with "legislative management"

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2341, as engrossed: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2341 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, remove "amend and reenact section 50-11-00.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 2, replace "relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth" with "provide for a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report"

Page 1, remove lines 4 through 22

Page 2, remove lines 1 through 30

Page 3, remove lines 1 through 5

Page 3, line 18, replace "interim human services committee" with "legislative management"

Renumber accordingly

2023 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

SB 2341

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
4/19/2023
AM Conference Committee

Relating to a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report.

9:30 AM **Chair Cleary** opened the conference committee meeting. **Senators Cleary, K. Roers, Hogan and Representatives Beltz, M. Ruby, Davis** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- House fiscal note
- Levels of care
- Study

Committee discussion SB 2341.

9:33 AM **Cory Pedersen, Children and Family Services Director, ND Department of Health and Human Services**, provided information. #27702

9:44 AM **Laura Feldman, Executive Director, North Dakota Home on the Range**, provided information verbally.

9:54 AM **Cory Pedersen** provided additional information and a fiscal note estimate. #27702

10:00 AM **Senator Cleary** closed the conference committee meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2341
4/19/2023
PM Conference Committee

Relating to a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report.

4:00 PM **Chair Cleary** opened the conference committee meeting. **Senators Cleary, K. Roers, Hogan and Representatives Beltz, M. Ruby, Davis** were present.

Discussion Topics:

- Proposed amendment
- Conference committee decision

Committee discussion SB 2341.

Senator Cleary called for discussion.

Representative M. Ruby moved House recede from House amendments and amend with LC 23.1054.02002

Senator K. Roers seconded the motion.

Roll call vote-motion carried 6-0-0.

Representative Beltz is the House bill carrier.

Senator K. Roers is the Senate bill carrier.

4:10 PM **Senator Cleary** closed the conference committee meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

April 19, 2023

JA
4-19-23

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2341

That the House recede from its amendments as printed on pages 1414 and 1415 of the Senate Journal and page 1595 of the House Journal and that Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2341 be amended as follows:

Page 1, line 1, remove "amend and reenact section 50-11-00.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 2, replace "relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth" with "provide for a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report"

Page 1, remove lines 4 through 22

Page 2, remove lines 1 through 30

Page 3, remove lines 1 through 5

Page 3, line 17, replace "January 2" with "July 1"

Page 3, line 18, replace "interim human services committee" with "legislative management"

Renumber accordingly

**2023 SENATE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
 ROLL CALL VOTES**

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2341 as engrossed

Senate Human Services Committee

- Action Taken** **SENATE accede to House Amendments**
 SENATE accede to House Amendments and further amend
 HOUSE recede from House amendments
 HOUSE recede from House amendments and amend as follows
- Unable to agree**, recommends that the committee be discharged and a new committee be appointed

Motion Made by: Representative M. Ruby Seconded by: Senator K. Roers

Senators	4/19 PM		Yes	No	Representatives	4/19 PM		Yes	No
Cleary, Chair	X		Y		Beltz, Chair	X		Y	
K. Roers	X		Y		M. Ruby	X		Y	
Hogan	X		Y		Davis	X		Y	
Total Senate Vote			3		Total Rep. Vote			3	

Vote Count Yes: 6 No: 0 Absent: 0

Senate Carrier K. Roers House Carrier Beltz

LC Number 23.1054 . 02002 of amendment

LC Number 23.1054 . 04000 of engrossment

Emergency clause added or deleted

Statement of purpose of amendment

Insert LC: 23.1054.02002
Senate Carrier: K. Roers
House Carrier: Beltz

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

SB 2341, as engrossed: Your conference committee (Sens. Cleary, K. Roers, Hogan and Reps. Beltz, M. Ruby, Davis) recommends that the **HOUSE RECEDE** from the House amendments as printed on SJ pages 1414-1415, adopt amendments as follows, and place SB 2341 on the Seventh order:

That the House recede from its amendments as printed on pages 1414 and 1415 of the Senate Journal and page 1595 of the House Journal and that Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2341 be amended as follows:

Page 1, line 1, remove "amend and reenact section 50-11-00.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,"

Page 1, line 2, replace "relating to definitions for foster homes for children and treatment centers for trafficked youth" with "provide for a study of youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking; and to provide for a legislative management report"

Page 1, remove lines 4 through 22

Page 2, remove lines 1 through 30

Page 3, remove lines 1 through 5

Page 3, line 17, replace "January 2" with "July 1"

Page 3, line 18, replace "interim human services committee" with "legislative management"

Renumber accordingly

Engrossed SB 2341 was placed on the Seventh order of business on the calendar.

TESTIMONY

SB 2341

Testimony Prepared for the
Senate Human Services Committee
February 13, 2023
By: Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director

RE: Senate Bill 2341 – Certified Family Foster Care Homes

Chair Lee and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Kim Jacobson. I am the Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director, which includes the service area of Traill and Steele Counties. In addition, I serve as President of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. Please consider my testimony in support of SB 2341.

In North Dakota, Human Service Zone Directors serve as the legal custodian of foster children. In this role, human service zones are charged with the legal authority and duty to place foster children and to provide case management services. This is a critical and important responsibility and one that brings many challenges.

One such challenge is finding appropriate, responsive, and sustainable placement for each child in our child welfare system. There are many complexities, nuances, policies, and laws that impact the placement of children. However, this situation becomes additionally challenging when searching for placement for children with complex needs and when trying to place sibling groups together.

SB 2341 would establish certified foster homes that would help create nimbleness for our licensing process. Many individuals express the interest in caring for foster children. However, the full foster care licensing process is at times daunting and is a significant commitment. Certification provides flexibility in licensure type and provides families and/or those with a relationship with a child, an opportunity to experience being a foster care home prior to making the full commitment to full licensure. This licensing option is missing from our

current placement system, yet successful in other states. Adding this option would be helpful in meeting the needs of North Dakota's foster youth and for enhancing placement options.

It is important for the committee to be informed about another bill that addresses the need for certified foster care homes, HB 1091. This bill, which has passed the House and will be forwarded to the Senate upon crossover, is very similar to SB 2341. However, HB 1091 contains additional critical language regarding funding flexibilities that are critically needed to provide flexibility and support to families helping care for relative children engaged in the child welfare system. Therefore, while I stand in support of SB 2341 today, I believe the language in SB 2341 better addresses North Dakota's overall need related to certified foster homes and kinship family homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I stand for questions from the committee.



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2341

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
February 13, 2023

Madam Chair Lee and honorable members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

Our organization, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action, is submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2341 and respectfully requests that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

We certainly support the foster home program and deeply thank the families that make the decision to welcome children from broken homes into their families and lives. Foster children often need special attention that children who grew up in healthy family situations might not otherwise need. Because of this, we believe there should be a threshold on the number of children assigned per foster home, as the bill notes. As a state, we need to ensure that these children receive the attention and level of help they need to grow and flourish beyond the situations they came from.

This bill also addresses providing home treatment specific to meet the needs of youth at risk of or identified as victims of human trafficking. Since 2015, the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force has served over 700 victims of human trafficking in North Dakota¹. Approximately 29%, or 203 of those victims were minors, and these numbers don’t even include those that were not able to get the help that they needed. There is a documented problem with trafficking of minors in our state, and providing home treatment specific to their needs is an important tool to help them. In addition, this action would be advantageous in providing targeted help for those who have been in the foster system as children, but may no longer qualify based on age.

This bill is about children: foster children and youths who are victims or likely victims of human trafficking. We have an obligation as a state to provide help in these situations, and for this reason, we at North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action request a “DO PASS” on SB 2341.

Thank you for allowing us to testify and please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director

¹ <https://www.ndhttf.org/north-dakota-overview>

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701-355-6425
www.ndfamilyalliance.org



*Representing the Diocese of Fargo
and the Diocese of Bismarck*

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701-223-2519
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To: Senate Human Services Committee
From: Christopher Dodson, Executive Director
Subject: Senate Bill 2341 - Residential Treatment Center for Trafficked Youth
Date: February 13, 2023

The North Dakota Catholic Conference supports SB 2341 so we can better provide for trafficked youth within the state's care.

The Family First Prevention Services Act incentivized states to place foster care children in a home setting as soon as possible by restricting funding for non-foster family home settings. The Act also provides some exceptions, one of them being Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP). The Act also provides an exception for "a setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims."

Congress, therefore, recognized that trafficked youth may not be best served under the QRTP parameters. Senate Bill 2341 includes residential treatment centers for trafficked youth within the definition of foster care facilities so that the Department of Health and Human Services can begin the process of exercising the option given in the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Lauren Feldmann, Executive Director of Home on the Range, an entity under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Bismarck, will follow me to explain their program and how these youth could be better served under trafficked youth option.

Before turning it over to her, however, I want to point out some errors in the bill draft.

This bill should only add residential treatment centers for trafficked youth in the definitions. Anything in the bill concerning "certified family foster home for children" was included in error and should be removed.

Thank you.

Senate Bill 2341

Home on the Range Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

2-13-23

Laura Feldmann LCSW, Executive Director, Home on the Range

Home on the Range-

- ▶ Qualified Residential Treatment Program
- ▶ Established 1950
- ▶ Licensed by the state for 36 youth
- ▶ Boys and girls ages 12-19
- ▶ Working cattle ranch
- ▶ Trauma informed programming
- ▶ Drug and alcohol programming
- ▶ Bottom up programming to address significant trauma and self regulation deficits
- ▶ Family therapy options
- ▶ Experiential programming-
 - ▶ Canine Assisted Therapy
 - ▶ Equine Assisted Therapy
 - ▶ Adventure Therapy



This IS a North Dakota problem-

- ▶ A drug seeking mother sells her 16 year old daughter to her drug dealer. The man injected her daughter with methamphetamine and then performed sexual acts with her daughter while the mother was in the same room. Later the mother was given the drugs in the parking lot of the hotel as payment. This young lady grew up and took her mothers place in the trafficking world as a recruiter.
- ▶ A 15 year old girl “dating” a 27 year old male felon who provided her with a place to stay and drugs. The man took her to Las Vegas, and when done with her, abandoned her high on meth at a gas station.
- ▶ A 14 year old girl was sold by her mother to obtain propane to heat their home over the winter. This was a generational issue, the grandmother, and great grandmother also sold their daughters for propane.
- ▶ A 13 year old girl who had “lots of daddies” that her mom “gave” to her. She was living with a 22 year old “daddy” prior to treatment. She talked about a game she and her “daddy” would play where he would hog tie her and she would try to get out of the ropes.

-Vignettes of actual HOTR youth.

Trafficking Cases in North Dakota



-North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force

Identified in-
Rural

Urban

Along I 94

Off I 94

Well policed areas

Not well policed areas

Oil country

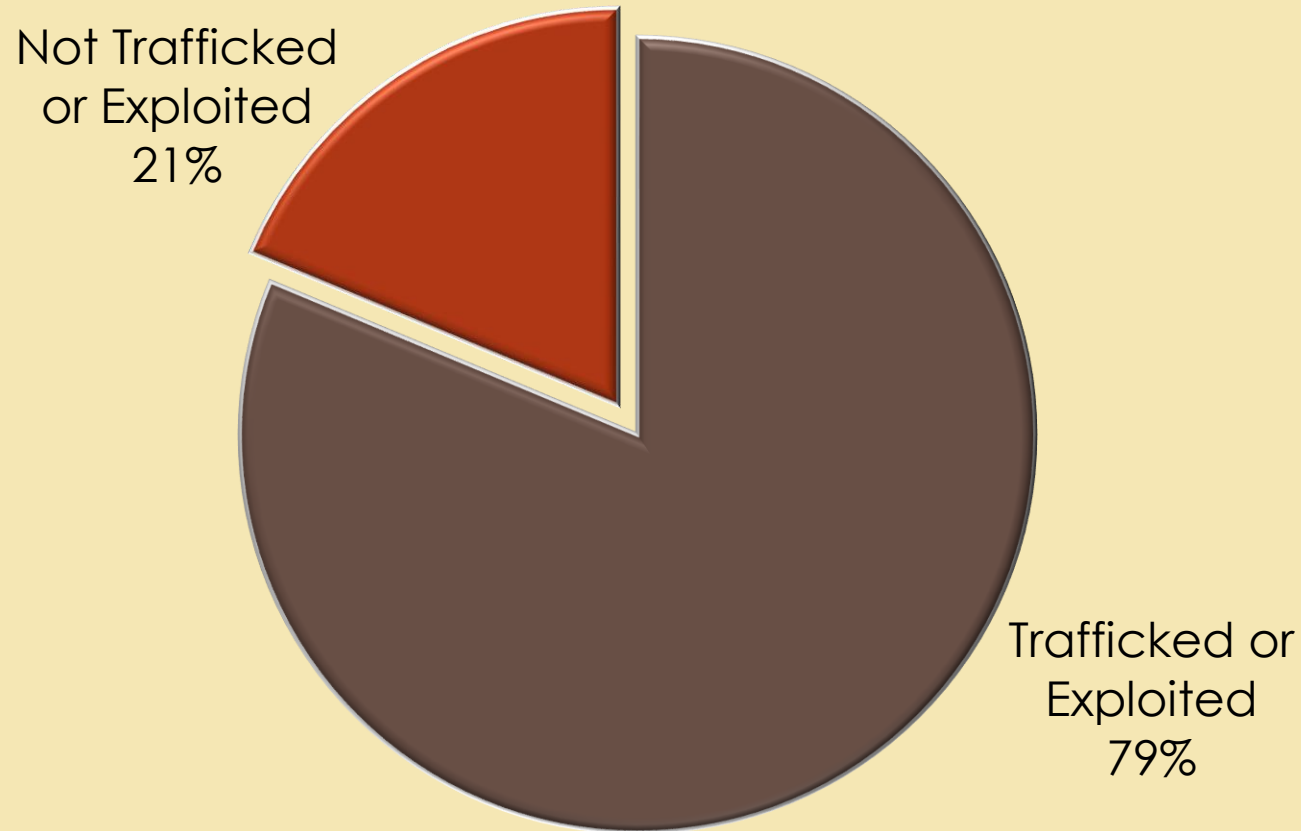
Non oil country

Reservations

Off reservations

HOTR admission Data 2019- 2022

Home on the Range
Sexually Exploited or Trafficked Admissions Data



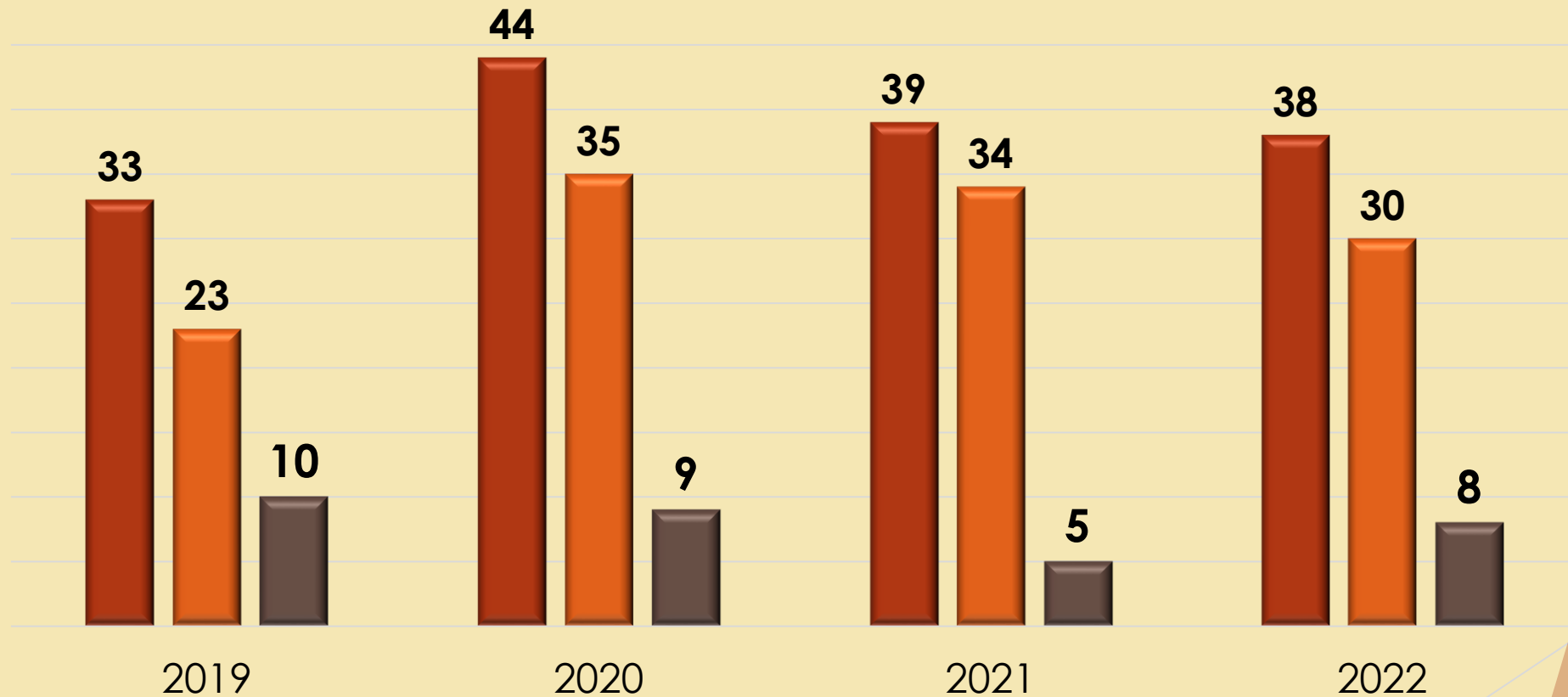
Total Youth- 154

Non-Trafficked/Exploited- 32

Trafficked/Exploited - 122

Home on the Range Admissions Data-

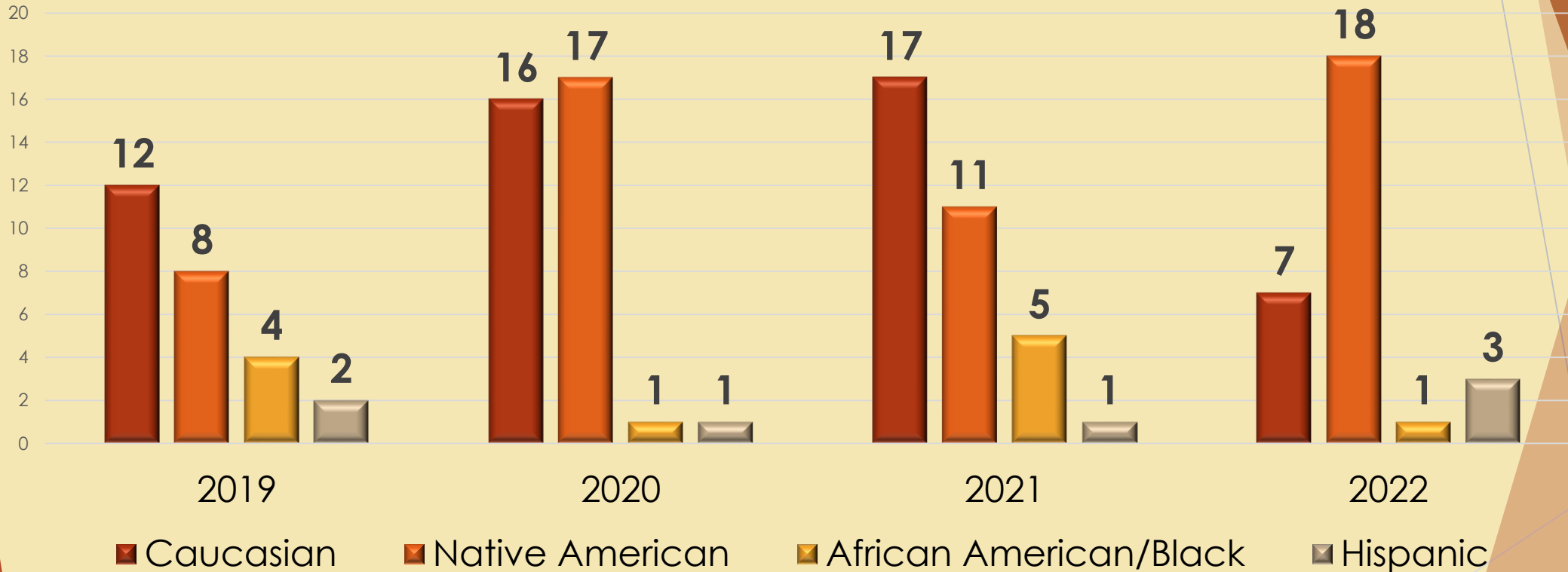
Home on the Range Female Population Data by the Year



■ All Female Admissions ■ Trafficked or Exploited ■ Not Trafficked or Exploited

Home on the Range Trafficked/Exploited Female Youth By Race-

Home on the Range Female Exploited/Trafficked Race Data

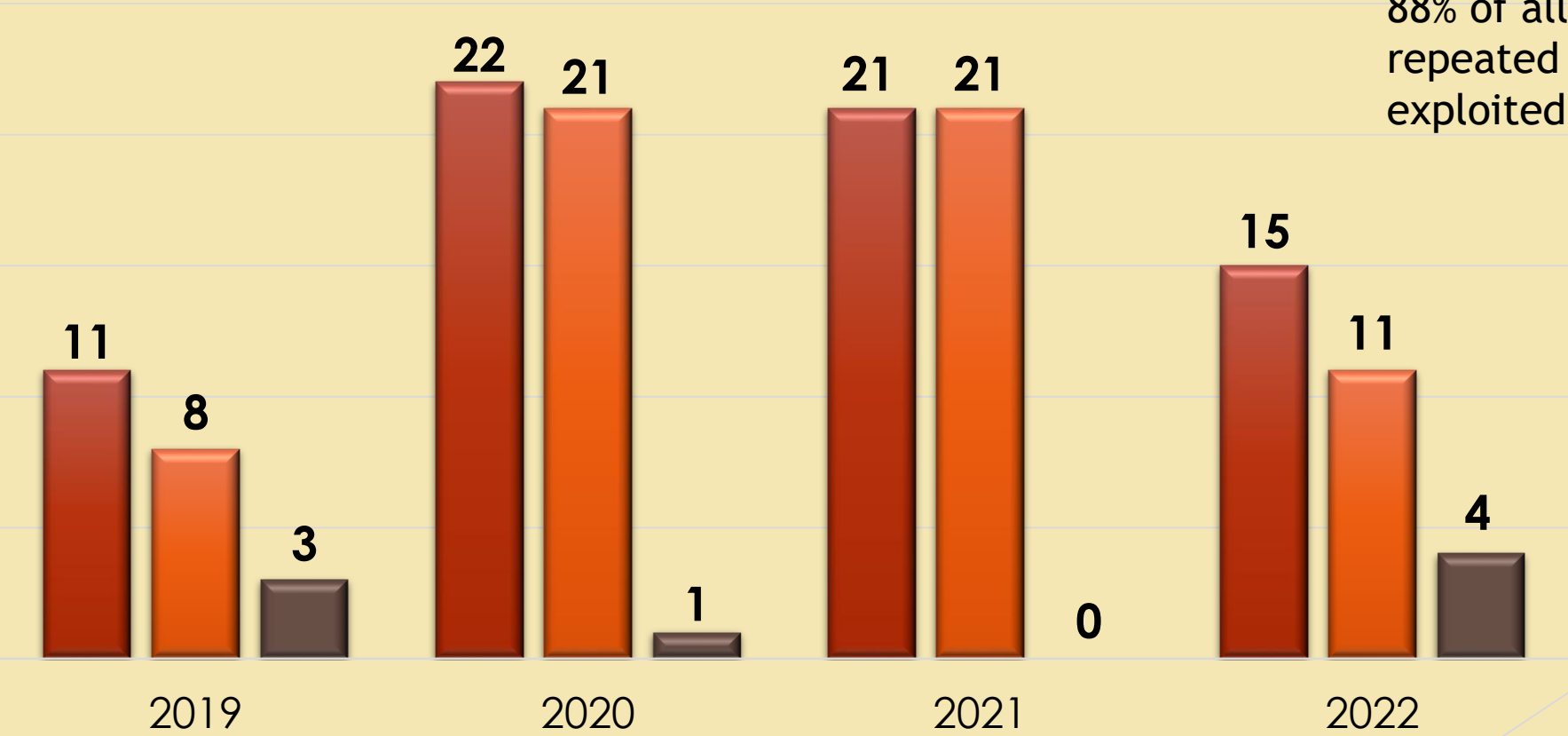


*US Census Bureau/ ND 2020 Census-
White alone/combonation-88%
Native American alone/Combination- 7.2%
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Home on the Range Female Re-admission Data-

HOTR Female Re-Admissions

88% of all girls who had repeated stays were exploited or trafficked.



■ Total re-admitted girls ■ Exploited or Trafficked ■ Not Exploited or Trafficked

Research recommendations for treatment-

- ▶ Collaboration and central contact case manager
- ▶ Multidisciplinary Team Approach (MDT)
- ▶ Treatment is only possible if the youth engage and form relationships
- ▶ Providers need to understand trauma bonding, human trafficking dynamics and CSEC in ND
- ▶ Survivor informed/support/lead
- ▶ Focus on harm reduction
- ▶ All interventions be trauma informed, client centered and strengths based
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- ▶ Comprehensive training
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- ▶ Awareness and planning for youth running away and relapsing
- ▶ Length of stay 18-24 months
- ▶ Staff secure facility to help youth feel safe
- ▶ Medical services and screenings
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Home on the Range can meet the research recommendations-

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- ▶ Accept, and expect re-referrals.
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 - ▶ In person
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 - ▶ Family Workshops across the state
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 - ▶ Rhythmic Ride- NDSU Doctoral student dissertation research project – 2022
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How HOTR addresses trauma & relationship wounds.

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- ▶ Healing the brain and skill building emotional regulation utilizing bottom up interventions-
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What hope looks like at Home on the Range-

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HOME on the *Range*

Laura Feldmann, LCSW

Executive Director

Lauraf@hotrnd.com

701-872-3745 ext. 7103

Chairman Lee and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 2341 today. My name is Laura Feldmann, I am the Executive Director at Home on the Range, a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) near Beach, ND.

Senate Bill 2341 would allow North Dakota to exercise an option under the Family First Prevention Services Act to create a residential program specifically for sexually exploited and trafficked youth. Home on the Range is currently serving this population within the QRTP system. However, the QRTP parameters prevent us from implementing the best practice recommendations for this population, especially regarding lengths of stay.

Home on the Range began tracking our work with sexually exploited and trafficked youth in 2018. Between 2019 and 2022, we have had 154 female admissions. Of those 154 girls, 122 of them were sexually exploited or trafficked, 79% of the ND girls admitted to Home on the Range have been sexually exploited or trafficked. Since 2018, Home on the Range has done extensive training, research, and hired expert consultants in the field of human trafficking. We have joined with the Bureau of Criminal Investigations, 31:8, the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force, Youthworks, ND Multidisciplinary teams, and numerous others to increase our knowledge, skill set and provide the best possible programming for these youth.

In the PDF you have received, you will find general information about Home on the Range and the work we do. You will see data on the youth we serve and what they bring with them. You will read the stories of a few of our youth and the unimaginable circumstances they found themselves in, and the lessons they learned with us. You will see statistics related to what we have seen

in our female youth since 2019 related to this issue. You'll find a detailed list of research treatment recommendations for youth who have experienced sexual exploitation and/or trafficking. Home on the Range provides treatment to these youth. We are dedicated, passionate, and knowledgeable.

There has been a great deal of research about what treatment works best for sexually exploited and trafficked youth. Home on the Range has worked diligently to check off these boxes as we gained expertise over the last several years working with this population. However, one of the key factors to successful treatment is out of our reach. The best research recommends 18-24 months of residential treatment for these youth. Due to the QRTP parameters, our average length of stay for the last year is just under 3 months.

You will see in the PDF you received that 88% of all of our female repeat admissions were kids that were sexually exploited and or trafficked. Kids who have experienced sexual exploitation and trafficking build huge walls to keep outsiders away because of many factors including but not limited to fear, guilt, shame, and survival. It takes time, patience and consistency for these youth to consider cracking these concrete walls and risk building new relationships. Therapy cannot take place without a relationship. It is the cornerstone to healing.

One of the most successful ways to crack these walls and work with the kids to risk building new relationships, is by joining with our horses and dogs to do animal-assisted therapy. Our kids have very little success in having safe, reciprocal relationships prior to coming to us. The kids engage with the animals, they find them safe, and good listeners. It never ceases to amaze me, how our kids so often feel safer with a 1200-pound animal than they do with most men, or

women. The animals are not judgmental and don't stereotype our kids or blame them for the baggage they brought with them to treatment. A lot of our kids learn what safe relationships look like and feel like working with our animals. Our job becomes transitioning those skills learned in the kennel or barn to relationships with peers, adults and family members.

I had one trafficked young lady who was given a task in the arena to build a representation of the home she came from, and the home she wanted for her future. This young lady was torn between loyalty to the family and life she spent the last 17 years in, and the dreams she had for a different future for herself. As she built her homes out of PVC pipe and pool noodles, Sami, her horse stood by the side and watched. This youth labeled the walls and floor of the house she grew up in with the words lies, loyalty, kind of love, and drugs. Her future home held labels including school, sobriety, trust and love. She then brought Sami to her two homes. Sami pulled back and had nothing to do with the home she grew up in, and went to stand by the home she wanted. For her, this made things very clear, where she came from, and where she wants to go.

Ending the Game is a curriculum created by Rachel Thomas, who is a survivor and an appointed member of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. Ending the Game is nationally recognized as a promising practice in working with exploited and trafficked youth. Ms. Thomas and I have had several conversations about our work with her curriculum. Home on the Range is the first and only program to implement equine-assisted therapy as an add on to her curriculum. And she loves it. Ms. Thomas is so intrigued that she highlighted a clip of one of our youth working with her horse on the Ending the Game website. Ms. Thomas has also stated her intentions to come to ND in August and with permission, bring her video crew and interview any willing youth who have been

exploited or trafficked, about their experiences at Home on the Range. We are making national waves with our program. We could work together to put ND on the cutting edge of work done with these youth.

People have hurt these youth. Kids whose family members trafficked them for drugs, whose 30-year-old boyfriends turned them out to friends.

We provide best practices, evidenced-based programs to our kids designed to teach them about how they got into “the life”, how coercion works, what to watch for, and how to get out of the life when they are ready. You couple this with skill building in a safe environment, these youth have a chance. What gets in the way, is the current structure required by being a QRTP. The area we fall short on is the recommended length of stay that these youth require to make the significant changes to keep them safe.

As I mentioned Home on the Range is currently a QRTP. There are, however, aspects of this structure that are not conducive to some of the best practices identified in the body of research on sexually exploited and trafficked youth. For example, research recommends an 18-24 month stay for this population, something not allowed under the QRTP parameters.

We agree that children should be placed in home settings as soon as safely possible. The Family First Prevention Services Act itself, however, recognized that there exist some populations who will need additional time. This is why the federal law allows QRTPs as well as placements that provide “high quality residential care and support services to children and youth who have been found to be,

or are at the risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims, in accordance with each state's policies and procedures.”

Senate Bill 2341 would allow the state to begin the process of exercising the additional option under the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Youth who qualify for this program would be of little or no additional cost to the state, they would just be receiving services under a different umbrella. While the length of placement would be longer, the numerous repeat stays is likely to shrink per national research recommendations. Home on the Range would of course continue to track the length of stay, and repeat admissions with both programs to continue to ensure we are being good financial stewards while providing the best care to our youth.

For these reasons, we ask for a Do Pass recommendation on Senate Bill 2341.

Any questions?

Roughrider North Human Service Zone

Dunn Office
205 Owens St - Suite 210
Manning, ND 58642
701-573-5385
Fax: 701-573-5070

Golden Valley/Billings Office
67 1st St SE - PO Box 279
Beach, ND 58621
701-872-4121
Fax: 701-872-3141

Hettinger Office
309 Millionaire Ave
Mott, ND 58646
701-824-3276
Fax: 701-824-2820

Stark Office
2680 Empire Road, Suite A
Dickinson, ND 58601
701-456-7675
Fax: 701-456-7777

Written Testimony in Support of **SB 2341**

Chair Lee and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee:

My name is Lisa Giese and I am the Foster Care Supervisor at Roughrider North Human Service Zone in Dickinson, ND. Roughrider covers the counties of Stark, Golden Valley, Billings, Dunn and Hettinger.

I am writing in support of SB 2341.

When children are removed from their homes due to the child/ren being unsafe, the Human Service Zones are charged with the legal responsibility and authority of placing children in foster homes, with family, or other placements such as Home on the Range. This has always been a challenge, however, much more so in the recent years. Our youth today are exposed to horrific and unimaginable things. Youth who are victims or likely victims of Trafficking require a specialized treatment modality. Home on the Range has laid out a specific and well-researched treatment program. It also appears this plan would be cost effective to North Dakota. Investing in our youth is also a smart choice.

I am asking that you DO PASS SB 2341.

Thank you for your time.

Lisa Giese, LBSW



Testimony
Senate Bill 2341
Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Lee , Chairman
February 13, 2023

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Cory Pedersen, Director of the Children and Family Services Section with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you to provide information on Senate Bill 2341.

Federal regulation, P.L. 115-123, known as the Family First Prevention Services Act, was passed by Congress in 2018. The law includes evidence-based prevention services to keep children and families together, with strong emphasis on the placement of children in family settings. This federal law prohibits the inappropriate use of long-term residential care. Family First regulations specify approved placements for children in foster care to receive federal reimbursement. Title IV-E foster care placements include a high-quality residential care setting to provide supportive services to children who have been found to be or are at risk of becoming sex trafficking victims.

During the 2019 legislative assembly, the Department requested to add many of the federal allowances and remove group care from our century code. The legislature replaced group care with qualified residential treatment programs (QRTP) and supervised independent living (SIL) levels of foster care placement (as per Title IV-E).

At that time, the state chose to not request implementation of a residential setting specific to sex trafficking victims. The rationale behind this decision

was based on the state's commitment to assuring that these children would be placed in specialized family settings, which are offered statewide by Youthworks, a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA).

Youthworks identifies themselves as an agency that recruits and retains host homes to serve trafficked children. In 2019, Youthworks had 10 licensed foster homes serving this unique population; most recently their agency has three licensed HOST Homes to care for children who are at risk of or have been a victim of sex trafficking.

Today, the Department licenses and works closely with QRTP's as a critical element of the state's continuum of care for children. Each QRTP offers a range of different treatment modalities as they are required to be trauma informed and meet the child's specific clinical needs within federally determined placement maximums. QRTP's are designed to address serious clinical needs of children who require 24/7 access to clinical and nursing staff.

In December 2020, the Department received feedback from Home on the Range, a private agency which serves as a licensed QRTP in North Dakota. Based on these conversations the Department implemented the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) module as part of the state's overall QRTP assessment practice. Since that time, 550 QRTP assessments involving 276 unique children have been completed, with 148 assessments (involving 76 unique children) identified as having a suspicion of the child having been sex trafficked. 86% of those identified as having suspicion were approved for QRTP treatment.

The Department was approached by Home on the Range about adding the new residential level of care that is proposed in Senate Bill 2341 to North Dakota Century Code 50-11 as a foster care placement option. The Department requested data from various entities including Youthworks, Home on the Range, ND Juvenile Court, ND Human Trafficking Task Force, as well as state child welfare data.

Availability of data on sex trafficking specific to children is not consistent between sources. For instance, North Dakota Child Welfare data since July 1, 2021, indicates from custodial case managers that only three children were confirmed as a victim of sex trafficking upon entry into foster care. North Dakota Juvenile Court data has flagged 27 children who are either confirmed or suspected of being sex trafficked since 2020. Youthworks stated they served over 200 children from 2019-2021, however, they have no separation of data regarding confirmed, suspected or at-risk children. Youthworks Host Homes are designed specifically for this population of children and their agency reports only one child in North Dakota foster care has been served since July 2021. The Human Trafficking Task Force reports 152 minors who are either confirmed or suspected of having been victims of sex trafficking since 2015. The Human Trafficking Task Force data does include victims located in North Dakota who may be residents of another state.

In summary, there are varied definitions across agencies regarding suspected vs. confirmed victims compared to those at risk. In addition, there are varied tracking mechanisms, which has resulted in lack of clarity regarding the need for a level of foster care designed specifically to offer residential treatment to victims of sex trafficking. If the level of foster care is added to North Dakota Century Code chapter 50-11, the Department will still

implement placement maximums, assessment and admission criteria, while requiring discharge planning in the least restrictive family setting in local communities, consistent with overall child welfare practice.

Over the last several years the state has made significant efforts to reduce long-term residential stays for children engaged with the child welfare system. I am pleased to share that today, 96% of children in ND foster care are living in family settings and served in our local communities.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Amendment SB 2341

Page 1, line 19, remove “Certified family foster home for children” means an occupied private residence in”

Page 1, remove lines 20 and 21.

Page 1, line 24, after the first comma, remove “certified family foster home for children,”

Page 2, line 17, after “licensed” remove “, certified,”

SECTION #. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING STUDY – REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT.

1. During the 2023-24 interim, the department of health and human services shall study and implement, in collaboration with other stakeholders, a standard framework for youth services for children impacted or potentially impacted by human trafficking.
2. The department of health and human services may collaborate with other stakeholders, including the child and family services section of the department of health and human services, the attorney general, and the human trafficking task force.
3. Before January 2, 2024, the department of health and human services shall report its findings and recommendations to the interim health and human services committee.

Senate Bill 2341

Home on the Range Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

3-6-23

Laura Feldmann LCSW, Executive Director, Home on the Range

Home on the Range-

- ▶ Qualified Residential Treatment Program
- ▶ Established 1950
- ▶ Licensed by the state for 36 youth
- ▶ Boys and girls ages 12-19
- ▶ Working cattle ranch
- ▶ Trauma informed programming
- ▶ Drug and alcohol programming
- ▶ Bottom up programming to address significant trauma and self regulation deficits
- ▶ Family therapy options
- ▶ Experiential programming-
 - ▶ Canine Assisted Therapy
 - ▶ Equine Assisted Therapy
 - ▶ Adventure Therapy



This IS a North Dakota problem-

- ▶ A drug seeking mother sells her 16 year old daughter to her drug dealer. The man injected her daughter with methamphetamine and then performed sexual acts with her daughter while the mother was in the same room. Later the mother was given the drugs in the parking lot of the hotel as payment. This young lady grew up and took her mothers place in the trafficking world as a recruiter.
- ▶ A 15 year old girl “dating” a 27 year old male felon who provided her with a place to stay and drugs. The man took her to Las Vegas, and when done with her, abandoned her high on meth at a gas station.
- ▶ A 14 year old girl was sold by her mother to obtain propane to heat their home over the winter. This was a generational issue, the grandmother, and great grandmother also sold their daughters for propane.
- ▶ A 13 year old girl who had “lots of daddies” that her mom “gave” to her. She was living with a 22 year old “daddy” prior to treatment. She talked about a game she and her “daddy” would play where he would hog tie her and she would try to get out of the ropes.

-Vignettes of actual HOTR youth.

Trafficking Cases in North Dakota



-North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force

Identified in-
Rural

Urban

Along I 94

Off I 94

Well policed areas

Not well policed areas

Oil country

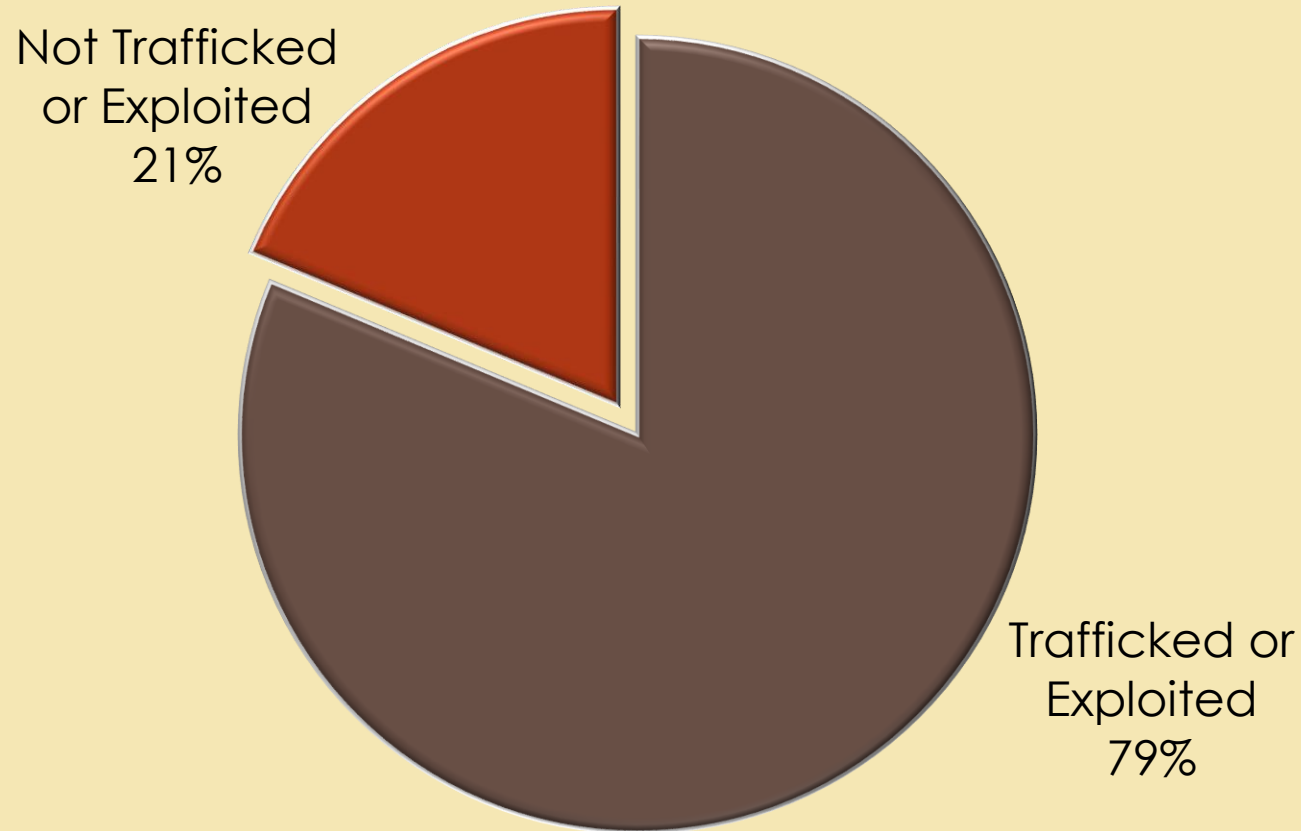
Non oil country

Reservations

Off reservations

HOTR admission Data 2019- 2022

Home on the Range
Sexually Exploited or Trafficked Admissions Data



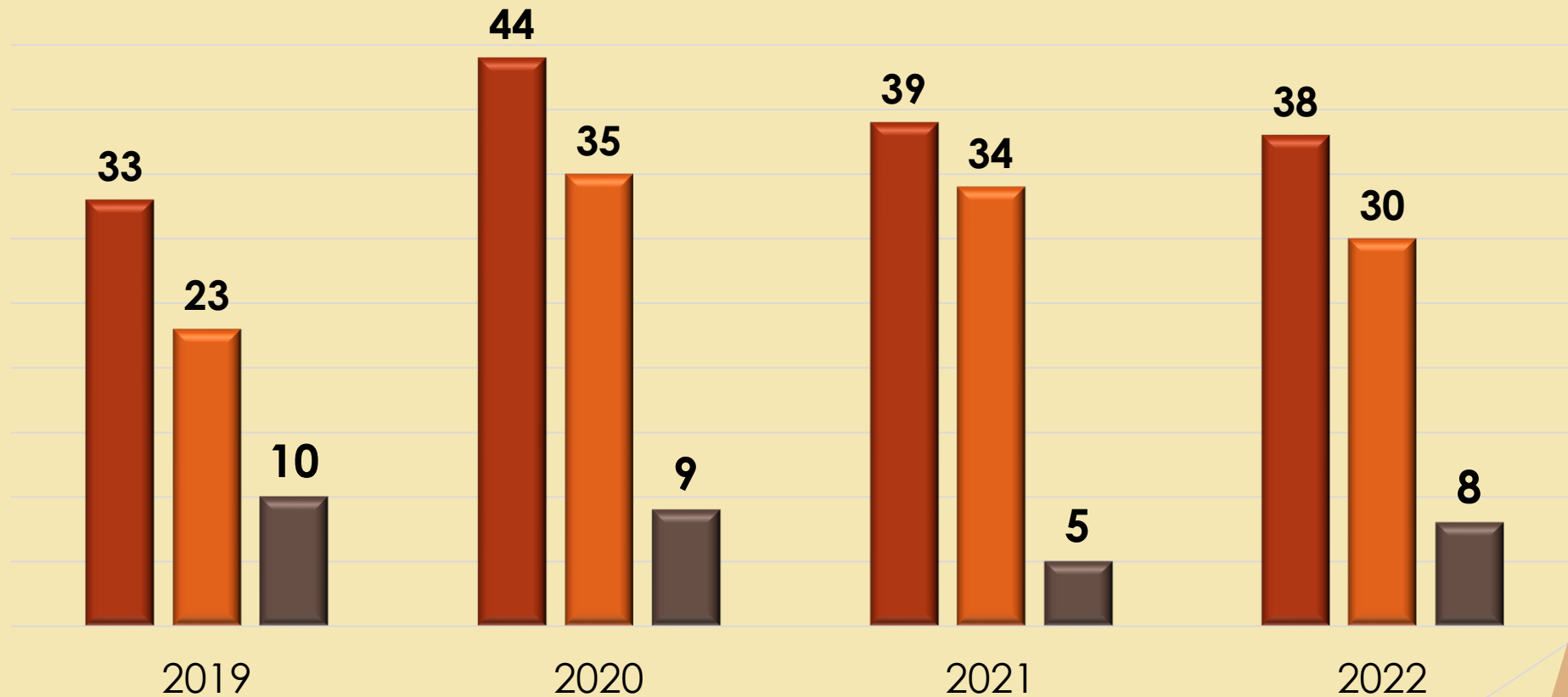
Total Youth- 154

Non-Trafficked/Exploited- 32

Trafficked/Exploited - 122

Home on the Range Admissions Data-

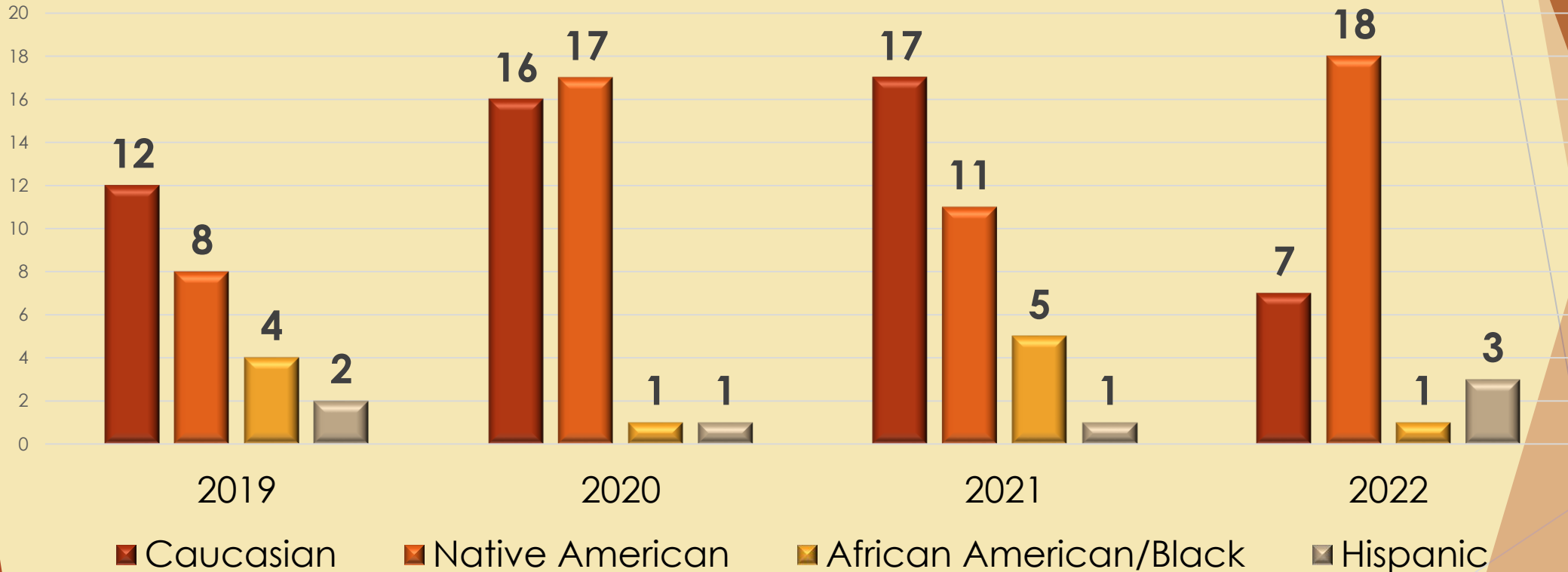
Home on the Range Female Population Data by the Year



■ All Female Admissions ■ Trafficked or Exploited ■ Not Trafficked or Exploited

Home on the Range Trafficked/Exploited Female Youth By Race-

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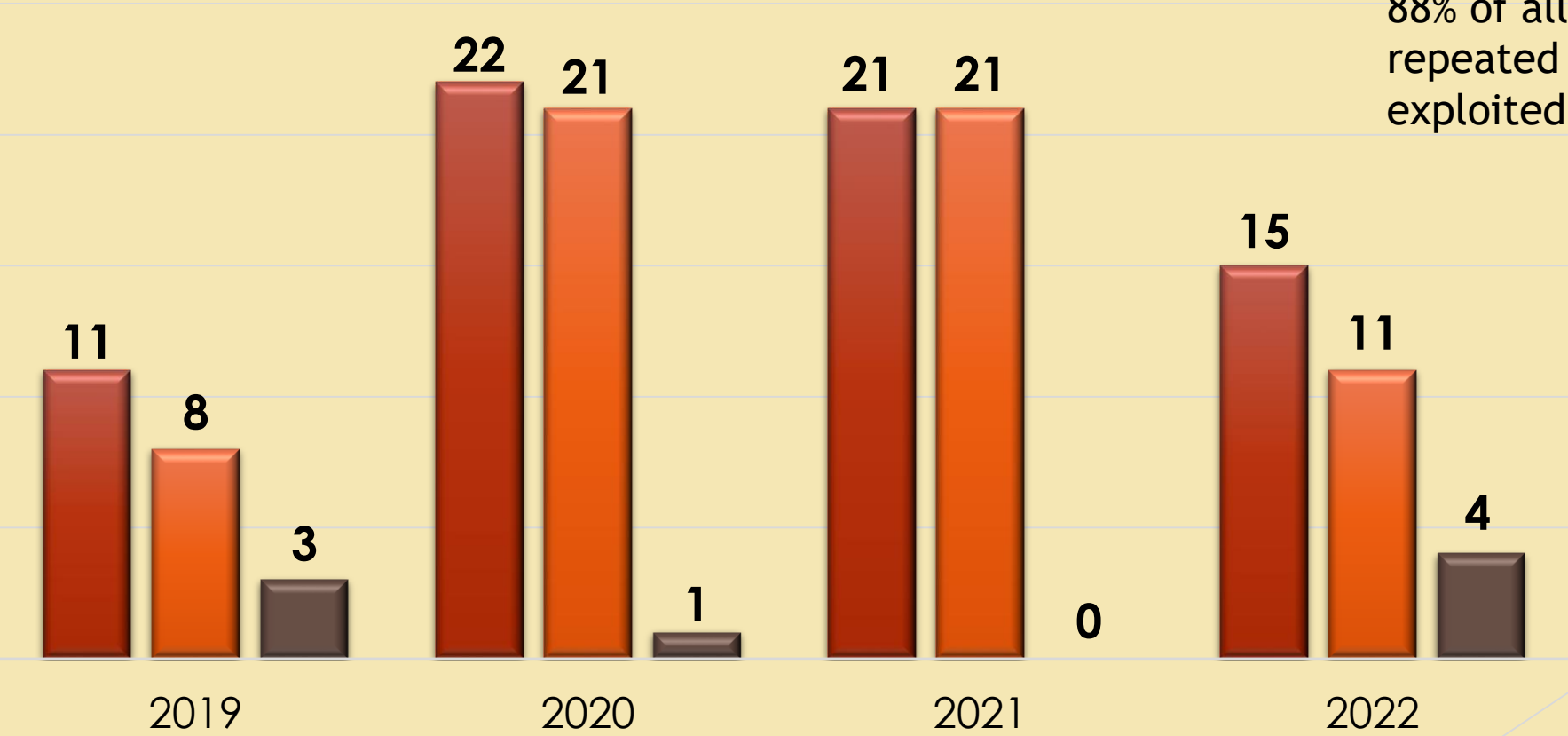


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HOME on the *Range*

Laura Feldmann, LCSW

Executive Director

Lauraf@hotrnd.com

701-872-3745 ext. 7103

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There has been a great deal of research about what treatment works best for sexually exploited and trafficked youth. Home on the Range has worked diligently to check off these boxes as we gained expertise over the last several years working with this population. However, one of the key factors to successful treatment is out of our reach. The best research recommends 18-24 months of residential treatment for these youth. Due to the QRTP parameters, our average length of stay for the last year is just under 3 months.

You will see in the power point that 88% of all our female repeat admissions were kids that were sexually exploited and or trafficked. Kids who have experienced sexual exploitation and trafficking build huge walls to keep outsiders away because of many factors including but not limited to fear, guilt, shame and survival. It takes time, patience and consistency for these youth to consider cracking these concrete walls and risk building new relationships. Therapy can not take place without a relationship. It is the cornerstone to healing.

One of the most successful ways to crack these walls and work with the kids get them to risk building new relationships is by joining with our horses and dogs to do animal-assisted therapy. Our kids have very little success in having safe, reciprocal relationships prior to coming to us. The kids engage with the animals, they find them safe, and good listeners. It never ceases to amaze me how our kids so often feel safer with a 1200-pound animal than they do with most adults. The animals are not judgmental and don't stereotype our kids or blame them for the baggage they brought with them into treatment. A lot of our kids learn what safe relationships look like, and feel like working with our animals. A young person who was passed around and traded for drugs has a whole different experience when every time she walks into the kennel, a rescue dog wags from head to tail excited to see her.

Ending the Game is a curriculum created by Rachel Thomas, who is a survivor and an appointed member of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. Home on the Range is trained in Ending the Game, which is nationally recognized as a promising practice in working with this population. Ms. Thomas and I have had several conversations about our work with her curriculum. Home on the Range is the first, and only program to implement an equine assisted psychotherapy component to her curriculum, and she loves it. Ms. Thomas is so

intrigued that she has highlighted a clip of one of our youth doing a session with her horse on her Ending the Game website. Ms. Thomas has also stated her intentions to come to ND in August and with permission, bring her video crew and interview any willing youth who have been exploited or trafficked about their experiences at Home on the Range. We are making national waves with our program. We could work together to put ND on the national scene of work being done with this population.

We provide best practices, evidenced based programs to our kids designed to teach them how they got into “the life”, how coercion works, what to watch for, and how to get out of “the life” when they are ready. You couple this with skill building in a safe environment, these kids have a chance. What gets in the way, is the current structure required by being a QRTP.

As I mentioned Home on the Range is a QRTP. There are, however, aspects of this structure that are not conducive to some of the best practices identified in the body of research on sexually exploited and trafficked youth.

We agree that children should be placed in home settings as soon as safely possible. The Family First Prevention Services Act itself, however, recognized that there exist some populations who will need additional time. This is why federal law allows QRTPs as well as placements that provide “high quality residential care and support services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at the risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims, in accordance with each state’s policies and procedures.”

Senate Bill 2341 would allow the state to begin the process of exercising this option under the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Youth who qualify for this program would be of little or no additional cost to the state, they would just be receiving services under a different umbrella. While the length of placement would be longer, the numerous repeat stays is likely to shrink per national research findings. Home on the Range would of course, continue to track length of stay and repeat admissions with both our QRTP and exploited and trafficked specific program, to ensure we are good financial stewards while providing the best care to our youth.

For these reasons, we ask for a Do Pass recommendation on Senate Bill 2341.

Thank you,

Laura Feldmann LCSW

Executive Director

Home on the Range

Testimony Prepared for the
House Human Services Committee
March 6, 2023
By: Dennis Meier, Three Rivers Human Service Zone Director

RE: Senate Bill 2341 – related to trafficked youth

Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Dennis Meier. I am the Three River Human Service Zone Director, which includes the service area of Grant, Morton, Sioux Counties. In addition, I am a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. Please consider my testimony in opposition of SB 2341.

In North Dakota, Human Service Zone Directors serve as the legal custodian of foster children. In addition, human service zones are charged with the legal authority and duty to place foster children, to provide case management services, and to provide in-home/prevention related services to children and families throughout North Dakota. This is a critical and important responsibility and one that brings many challenges.

As a human service zone director, I have ongoing concern about the provision and availability of appropriate placement and treatment options for children. Our current system lacks services and placements not only for trafficked youth, but many children with an array of needs and diagnosis. Simply said, we need every current service plus more to meet the needs of North Dakota children.

My concern about SB 2341 is that there is no fiscal note. I ask the committee to consider if this bill is approved, where will the funding come from for this highly specialized program? Will the Department be requested to incur this cost within their approved budget? If so, will other services that would serve a greater number of children and families be cut to provide this highly specialized service to a few? From my knowledge of specialized treatment

costs, it would be a fair estimate that this type of program could cost up to \$500,000 for one youth for the eighteen to twenty-four months of the proposed program. I am concerned that if SB 2341 is enacted, other critical services to children may be lost.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I stand for questions from the committee.



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2341

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
March 6, 2023

Dear Chairman Weisz and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee,

Our organization, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action, is submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2341 and respectfully requests that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

We certainly support the foster home program and deeply thank the families that make the decision to welcome children from broken homes into their families and lives. This bill would create certified foster homes that would help with the licensing process. We fully support this additional flexibility.

This bill also addresses providing home treatment specific to meet the needs of youth at risk of or identified as victims of human trafficking. Since 2015, the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force has served over 700 victims of human trafficking in North Dakota¹. Approximately 29%, or 203 of those victims were minors, and these numbers don’t even include those that were not able to get the help that they needed. There is a documented problem with trafficking of minors in our state, and providing home treatment specific to their needs is an important tool to help them. In addition, this action would be advantageous in providing targeted help for those who have been in the foster system as children, but may no longer qualify based on age.

This bill is about children: foster children and youths who are victims or likely victims of human trafficking. We have an obligation as a state to provide help in these situations, and for this reason, we at North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action request a “DO PASS” on SB 2341.

Thank you for allowing us to testify and please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director

¹ <https://www.ndhttf.org/north-dakota-overview>

March 6th, 2023

SB2341

North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee

Testimony from Sgt. Mike Bolme, Investigator, Bismarck Police Department

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sgt. Mike Bolme and I'm an investigator for the Bismarck Police Department. I submit this testimony today in favor of SB 2341.

I am a twenty-year police veteran and for six years have been a member of the Bismarck Human Trafficking Multidisciplinary Team. During that time, I have met with numerous youth who were victims of human trafficking. Many of those youth were victims of familial trafficking which is especially traumatic. I can tell you those victims need a vast array of support and care, and it takes a special kind of professional in the right setting to keep those youth on track for recovery. As a detective I have worked with all kinds of victims, but human trafficking victims suffer from the most complex trauma imaginable and require a vast array of services and support. Our local multidisciplinary team (and the ND Human Trafficking Task Force) does a fantastic job of supporting those youth, but the one thing we struggle with the most is the lack of residential treatment. We simply have nothing in our state to address this shortcoming and constantly struggle

I have toured facilities in Minnesota and South Dakota which address the needs of those states and am heartened by the possibilities of having such a facility here in North Dakota. The vast majority of North Dakotans do not realize this happens in our state, but trafficked youth take up a tremendous amount of time and resources from law enforcement and service providers. Residential treatment centers not only address the complex trauma issues those victims deal with, they also assist law enforcement and States Attorneys in keeping the victims stable and on track with prosecution. Victim-centered investigations and prosecutions require this type of support, which in turn gives us better witness testimony when it comes time to hold the traffickers accountable.

We have the professional competency in our state to deal with all of those complex issues. Law enforcement, prosecutors, children's advocacy centers, social services, youthworks, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, and Home on the Range (and many others) all work together to address the needs of victims of human trafficking. The main requirement we are lacking is a place to house and shelter those victims while we work on their extremely nuanced and complex needs. I am asking today for a "do pass" recommendation for SB 2341 to assist us in our efforts for those victims.

Sgt. Mike Bolme
Investigator
Bismarck Police Department

**Testimony
Senate Bill No. 2341
House Human Services Committee
Representative Weisz, Chairman
March 6, 2023**

Chairman Weisz, and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Cory Pedersen, Director of the Children and Family Services Section with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you today to provide information regarding Engrossed Senate Bill 2341.

The department spoke with the Senate Human Services committee and highlighted identified data discrepancies resulting in the request for this bill to be considered as a study. There are North Dakota providers interested in working with victims of sex trafficking, but there are inconsistencies which require the Department to question the need for another level of foster care in NDCC 50-11. The discussion of the study was considered and added as an amendment. However, the amendment did not remove the level of care addition to NDCC 50-11. As the director of Children and Family Services, my section of the Department will be responsible for the licensing of a new level of foster care. I greatly support the idea of a study to better understand the population and need. I do not support adding the level of care and maintaining the study as the two processes occurring in tandem will offer unintended barriers. A study would give all the stakeholders and providers time to make an informed decision for children in North Dakota and build up an entire continuum of care for victims; including prevention and community resources.

The 2018 Federal regulation, Family First Prevention Services Act (P.L. 115-123) prohibits the inappropriate use of long-term residential care for

children. During the 2019 legislative assembly, the Department requested to remove group home licensure, as group homes were accepting children and maintaining placements for months, many times years. Group homes no longer meet federal standards, so North Dakota requested to add qualified residential treatment programs (QRTP) as a level of foster care in NDCC 50-11. At the time of implementation, the Department chose not to add a residential setting specific to sex trafficking victims into NDCC 50-11. The rationale behind this decision was specific to maintaining this population of at-risk youth in a specialized family setting, which was already offered by a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), Youthworks. Youthworks identifies themselves as an agency who will recruit and retain HOST Homes to serve this population. At the time, Youthworks had 10 licensed foster homes and most recently their agency has three licensed HOST Homes to care for youth at risk of being trafficked: only serving one child in foster care since July 2021. The HOST Home model is something the Department greatly supports and hopes to see grow in the next biennium. Increased placement options in a family setting will greatly support the Department's initiative to ensure services are provided closer to home. I am pleased to share; the Department has made significant efforts to reduce long-term residential stays and promote placement in family settings. Today, 96% of children in ND foster care are living in family settings and served in our local communities with access to services and the opportunity to be close to parents, family, friends, and school.

The Department licenses and works closely with two qualified residential treatment programs, who offer a range of trauma informed treatment to meet the needs of children within federally determined placement maximums. Since October 2019, 86% of those identified as having "suspicion of being trafficked" were approved and received treatment in a

ND QRTP. I want to credit the current QRTP's who are already doing this work. We should be looking at the child's needs first and identifying ways to keep them in the lowest level of care possible, while considering data and research, which tells states that children do best and should be with parents or relatives whenever possible.

The Department was approached by Home on the Range about adding this residential level of care as a foster care placement option in NDCC 50-11. At that time, Children and Family Services requested data from various entities including Youthworks, Home on the Range, ND Juvenile Court, Human Trafficking Task Force, and child welfare. The sex trafficking data specific to youth in North Dakota is not consistent. For instance, North Dakota Child Welfare data since July 2021, indicates from custodial case managers that only three youth were confirmed as a victim of sex trafficking upon entry into foster care. North Dakota Juvenile Court data has flagged 27 youth who are either confirmed or suspected of being sex trafficked since 2020. Youthworks stated they served over 200 youth from 2019-2021, however, they have no separation of data regarding confirmed, suspected, or at-risk youth. The Human Trafficking Task Force reports 152 minors who are either confirmed or suspected of sex trafficking since 2015. The Human Trafficking Task Force data does include victims located in North Dakota who may be residents of another state.

The Department contacted five other states to discuss the sex trafficking level of foster care. South Dakota, Montana, and Ohio do not have this resource. Indiana has one sex trafficking treatment center they are phasing out; stating they want to specialize with family providers and not congregate this population of at-risk youth. Kansas has this level of care with a placement maximum of six months. North Dakota is a national leader in the

reduction of long-term residential placement. We continue to get calls from around the country asking for technical assistance regarding the ND QRTP process. Currently we have children from other states in our QRTP level of care and are seen as a leader in this work.

In summary, there is limited research to show this level of foster care is needed in North Dakota. There are varied tracking mechanisms and definitions used across North Dakota agencies regarding suspected vs. confirmed victims compared to those “at risk”. If the new level of foster care is added to NDCC 50-11, the Department will be required to implement administrative rules for one provider. Administrative rules will be created and require placement maximums and initial and ongoing third-party assessment, like our current QRTP standards we have today., however would be added costs to the budget.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



*Representing the Diocese of Fargo
and the Diocese of Bismarck*

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To: House Human Services Committee
From: Christopher Dodson, Executive Director
Subject: Senate Bill 2341 - Residential Treatment for Trafficked Youth
Date: March 6, 2023

The North Dakota Catholic Conference supports SB 2341 to provide better care for trafficked youth within the state's care.

The Family First Prevention Services Act incentivized states to place foster care children in a home setting as soon as possible by restricting funding for non-foster family home settings. The Act also provides some exceptions, one of them being Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP), an exception adopted by North Dakota.

The Families First Act, however, also provides an exception for “a setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims.”

From the outset of the act, therefore, Congress, recognized that trafficked youth may not be best served under the QRTP parameters. Specifically, these youth may require additional time and services not always available under the QRTP parameters. Senate Bill 2341 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to begin the process of adopting this additional option so that the state can better serve these youth.

Although she was not able to be here due today, Laura Feldmann, Executive Director of Home on the Range (HOTR)¹, submitted testimony online that describes the need for this additional option and how trafficked youth can be better served if the state pursues this option. As Ms. Feldmann mentions, the best research recommends 18-24 months of residential treatment for these youth. However, due to the QRTP parameters, the average length of stay for the last year at HOTR was just under 3 months. Not surprisingly, therefore, 88% of females returning to HOTR are “youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims.”

We share in the desire to reduce long-term stays in residential facilities. Senate Bill 2341 is not an invitation to reverse course and allow unneeded long-term stays. Nor is it about HOTR. Rather, it furthers the effort to reduce long-term stays by providing this particular subset of youth the right services so that they may leave prepared and less likely to be readmitted.

We ask for a **Do Pass** recommendation on Senate Bill 2341.

¹ Home on the Range operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Bismarck.

March 6, 2023

SB 2341

North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee

Testimony from Amy Boyd, Anti-Trafficking Program Manager, Youthworks

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Boyd; I am the Anti-Trafficking Program Manager for Youthworks; a private, non-profit agency that serves youth, ages twelve to twenty-four. I have come before you today to testify on SB 2341.

For the past eight years, I have worked directly with youth survivors of sexual exploitation and Human Trafficking. Many of the youth that we serve have been trafficked by drug dealers, who use their products to keep our clients compliant and under their control. When they are recovered by law enforcement, they are often coming down from substances like methamphetamines, fentanyl, and heroin, as well as having experienced daily sexual assaults from buyers and their trafficker. This is an especially important time to provide safety for these youth, as they are experiencing extreme withdrawal symptoms. If they are not placed in the right setting, with the right support, the combination of complex trauma, cravings and physical discomfort of withdrawal that they have drives them back into the streets, where they are again prey to traffickers.

A statewide multi-disciplinary team: comprised of law enforcement, state's attorney offices, children advocacy centers, victim service providers, and survivor experts (people who have experienced trafficking and are now working with the team), has made the recommendation that trafficked youth be allowed to stay

longer in specialized facilities. One such facility, Home on The Range, has become our 'go-to' solution for these youth. One of the biggest barriers that our team has experienced in helping youth achieve stability is the time limit imposed on placement. Often, youth are in the middle of an investigation or prosecution into their trafficker, which are sometimes family members. If they are required to leave the facility during this time, stability is lost, as is the prosecution. In the words of one of our staff, "Supported victims make good witnesses."

We have a coordinated system in place, with capable professionals who work together to prevent trafficking, support survivors, and assist Law Enforcement in bringing traffickers to justice. We are missing a long-term, specialized facility that has the ability to keep youth safe while they do the almost impossible work of healing from trafficking. I believe SB 2341 will greatly assist our teams so we can continue the important work we're doing on behalf of extraordinarily vulnerable North Dakotans.

**1 - STATE FISCAL EFFECT
IDENTIFY THE STATE FISCAL**

	2021-2023		2023-2025		2025-2027	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenue						
Expenditures			\$ 13,100,000	\$ 13,100,000		
Appropriations			\$ 13,100,000	\$ 13,100,000		

3. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2341 creates a new institutional level of care for trafficked youth. This would be an out-of-home residential treatment with an anticipated duration of stay of approximately 2 years.

4. Fiscal impact sections: *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

Engrossed SB 2341 creates a new type of residential treatment for trafficked youth. As noted in public testimony heard by the committee, the Home on the Range (HOTR) is the service provider who wants to offer this level of care. HOTR currently operates a 36 bed Qualified Residential Treatment facility (QRTP); they have 12 open beds as of February 2023. To implement engrossed SB 2341 would suggest an expansion of the number of beds available for this level of institutional care. The estimate in this fiscal note is based on information provided in testimony regarding anticipated length of stay (24 months), the number of youth who may be eligible over the course of a biennium (66), and the current daily rate paid to Home on the Range for Qualified Residential Treatment (QRTP) services (\$726/day). The fiscal note assumes the youth who would be receiving services are already receiving 3 months of QRTP-level care; the estimate reflects the cost of the additional time in institutional placement (range of 15-21 months). Note: the fiscal note does not include an estimate for any costs associated with medical care. Medical costs for the youth receiving services would need to be funded with General Fund dollars as HOTR is an IMD and not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement; medical costs are not included in the daily rate for services available through IV-E.

5. Revenues: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1 or 2, please explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

The fiscal note anticipates that Title IV-E 50% match would be available; based on the cost estimate above, the federal funds available would like range from \$10,930,838.50 (15 month assumption) to \$15,303,172.50 (21 month assumption).

6. Expenditures: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1 or 2, please explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

Estimated financial impact of this new level of care of service based on the Home on the Range testimony, 66 youth over two years, 2021-2022, with duration of placement ranging from 15 to 21 months longer than the current average of 3-6 months at this level of care. The additional time in an institutional setting was estimated at \$21,780 per month based on current rates at Home on the Range.

The estimate assumes an additional 15 months of services would cost \$21,861,675 per biennium and an additional 21 months of services would cost \$30,606,8345.

7. Appropriations: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1 or 2, Please explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation or a part of the appropriation is included in the executive budget or relates to a continuing appropriation.*

The items outlined in SB 2341 are not included in the HHS executive budget. The cost associated with SB 2341 would require and increase to the grants line of \$26,200,000 of which \$13,100,000 is general fund.