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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.