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31:8 Project is submitting this testimony as NEUTRAL to HCR 3028.

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stacy Schaffer, Executive Director of 31:8 Project, and I am providing NEUTRAL testimony to HCR 3028. Thank you for the opportunity to share information about 31:8 Project and the important work we are doing to combat human trafficking. I launched 31:8 Project in 2015 but have been working in the anti-human trafficking field since 2006. I have also been a member of the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force since its inception. **31:8 Project is a nonprofit organization located in Bismarck dedicated to raising awareness about human trafficking throughout North Dakota (ND).** Our organization is unique in that we focus solely on providing services to adult victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Our mission is carried out through three key initiatives:

- **Demand Reduction Program (ND Century Code 12.1-29-07):** A major challenge in addressing human trafficking in ND is the persistent demand for hiring others to engage in sexual activity. In an attempt to create long-term solutions to change the underlying systems that allow sex trafficking to occur, **the 2015 Legislative session voted in favor of creating the Demand Reduction Program (DRP), a comprehensive intermediate sentencing, diversion, and education option for offenders charged with or convicted of solicitation of sexual acts with individuals over 18 years of age. Managed by 31:8 Project, this is the only state program that focuses on reducing the demand for prostitution.** The DRP educates offenders on the risks and impacts of sex trafficking, providing tools to improve relationships that may have influenced their decisions. By fostering healthier relationships and communities in North Dakota, the program aims to reduce recidivism and increase awareness of trafficking's effects. **Since its inception, 33 offending participants (ages 20-67) have successfully completed the program.**
- **Providing Education:** In 2024, 31:8 Project delivered **166 trainings and presentations** (a 40% increase from 2023) to individuals of all ages, including school-based programs, law enforcement, healthcare, service providers and general public. This education includes human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and online safety. This year, we will host our *5th Annual Bakken Human Trafficking Summit* in Bismarck, with the goal of educating over 400 professionals and community members.
- **Survivor Mentorship Program:** This program, launched in 2021, supports adult survivors of human trafficking over the age of 18. During the first year of the program, 31:8 Project worked with 10 survivors of human trafficking. **In 2024, this number increased to 62 sex and labor trafficking survivors - 85% of these individuals were**