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*In support of Senate Bill 2330*

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stacy Schaffer, and I am the Founder and Executive Director of 31:8 Project, a Bismarck-based nonprofit dedicated to equipping and challenging society to proactively address human trafficking through education, advocacy, and awareness. I launched the nonprofit in 2015 but have been working in the anti-human trafficking field since 2006. Outside of 31:8 Project, I teach a human trafficking course at the University of Mary. 31:8 Project's work is accomplished through program areas including education, running the statewide Demand Reduction Program, and providing services to survivors of human trafficking through our mentorship program. In 2024, we were privileged to assist 62 survivors of human trafficking, 85% of whom were trafficked within North Dakota. Additionally, we delivered 166 trainings and presentations statewide to a diverse range of audiences including schools (5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade), law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community organizations. 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.

Regarding this bill, 31:8 Project knows firsthand the importance of education on this topic as that was the initial reason we came into existence. Human trafficking education for youth is important because it can help prevent trafficking and protect young people. According to Shared Hope International, the average age in which someone is targeted regarding human trafficking is between 12 and 14. With appropriate education, we can empower youth to protect themselves and their peers, avoid situations that could lead to trafficking, and better understand what a healthy relationship should look like. Thank you all for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.