



April 3, 2024

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share **Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's support of Senate File 5032.**

LSS is a provider of essential services across all 87 counties with more than 2,500 employees who serve one in 63 Minnesotans every year. This includes statewide services for youth experiencing homelessness, survivors and victims of sex trafficking, and preventative supports through wraparound services to families. These programs serve 41 counties and are rooted in the following communities and their surrounding areas: Duluth, Virginia, Brainerd, Willmar, St. Cloud, Mankato, Rochester, and the seven-county metro area.

In St. Paul, LSS operates LifeHaven which provides transitional housing for up to 6 mothers ages 16 to 17 and their children. LifeHaven is the only supportive housing program in Ramsey County for minor-headed families experiencing homelessness, providing a critical service to two generations. Across the state, LSS also supports youth-headed families aged 18-24 who've experienced homelessness with housing assistance, case management, advocacy, independent living skills education, and parenting skills education.

The study proposed in Senate File 5032 will help us determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness. It will also help us to determine how to best provide support for the unique needs of youth headed families, and it will identify the gaps in existing services and supports, including emergency shelter and housing, for this population. The findings of this study will help LSS and other service providers strengthen a continuum of services for youth that build on their assets and strengths, connect them with supportive adults to ensure stability, and create a future that fulfills their potential.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity. Please contact Erin Sutton, LSS' Senior Director of Advocacy, at [erin.sutton@lssmn.org](mailto:erin.sutton@lssmn.org) if we may provide further information on this deeply important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen P. Kingsley".

Karen Kingsley  
Sr. Director  
LSS Youth and Family Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Shykes".

Dawn Shykes  
Sr. Director  
LSS Youth and Family Services