



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

August 14, 2019

To: The Honorable Van Wanggaard and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Regarding: SB 49

Dear Chairman Wanggaard and Committee Members,

I am representing the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin, a statewide advocacy ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We advocate for just policies, especially related to hunger and poverty and care for God's creation.

During the last five and one half years, I have

- learned that this state law will put us in alignment with federal law.
- heard from direct service providers that the system of holding sex trafficked youth in jail is not working. We need to focus on getting them to human services, and continuing to support state budgets that provide that funding.
- witnessed a former attorney general, Brad Schimel, move from being against this bill to being in support of it to the extent of testifying that he had a change of heart at a hearing.
- heard Judge Ramona Gonzalez who drove from La Crosse to testify that sex trafficking of youth is a serious problem in our state and that even though there is good will between judges, who don't want to charge youth for prostitution, that they still charge youth with "lewd and lascivious behavior," that can go on a youth's record in place of prostitution.
- observed my colleagues in other states watch this same type of bill pass. Those states include Pennsylvania and Georgia. We are behind Georgia.

We ask that you support this bill, but not only that. We respectfully ask that you support bringing this bill to the floor and encourage the assembly to not let this bill disappear again, the way we sometimes let young people disappear.

Thank you for your consideration.

Reverend Cindy Crane, Director

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Luke 18:16