



News Release

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Carver County Board of Commissioners Adopt Resolution in Support of Amending Minnesota's Safe Harbor Act to Define all Sex-Trafficked Children Under the Age of 18 as Crime Victims

On Tuesday, January 15, 2013, the Carver County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt a resolution in support of amending Minnesota's Safe Harbor Act to define all sex-trafficked children under the age of 18 as crime victims.

On July 20, 2011, Governor Mark Dayton signed into law the "Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth" Act. This legislation identifies prostituted children as victims of sexual exploitation and calls upon the State to create a framework to provide a victim-centered response to these children.

By adopting the resolution, the Carver County Board of Commissioners has indicated its commitment to take a leadership role in convening a statewide summit of County leaders around this issue to develop a victim-centered response to eliminate sex trafficking of our children.

Sex trafficking is a heinous crime that occurs throughout Minnesota and impacts Minnesota children from diverse geographic and socio-economic backgrounds. It is estimated that every day in Minnesota, 8,000-12,000 people are involved in prostitution and/or sex trafficking - many of the victims of sex trafficking are children. The average age of the child being trafficked is 12-14 years old. The life expectancy of a person sold into prostitution is seven years following his or her first experience.

Carver County Attorney Mark Metz commented, "It is critical that we change the way we treat these children in our legal system - treating them not as delinquents, but as the victims they are, addressing their needs immediately and appropriately, and strengthening the penalties for the criminals so we treat them as the predators they are. The Carver County Sheriff's Office and the Chaska Police Department share our commitment to these important goals. "

Tim Lynch, Chair of the Carver County Board of Commissioners, stated, "Carver County is committed to joining other metro counties on the front-line in combatting this very serious problem affecting our children and communities. I am proud that the Carver County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved this Resolution."

A copy of the Resolution is attached to this release.

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