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February 9, 2022

RE: Supporting Harassment Restraining Orders for Emancipated Youth (HF 2665)

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Members of the Committee,

I write to express Youthprise's strong support for HF 2665, which would allow emancipated youth to seek Harassment Restraining Orders (HROs).

Youthprise is a statewide organization with a mission of increasing equity with and for Minnesota's Indigenous, low-income, and racially diverse youth. As part of that mission, we're especially attuned to areas of Minnesota state law that create barriers for certain groups of young people. For instance, last year we successfully repealed a law dating back to 1939 that prohibited high school students from being eligible for unemployment insurance.

This year, our friends at Legal Aid are bringing attention to another one of these gaps in Minnesota statute. There currently is no way for emancipated youth to obtain an HRO to protect themselves from predatory or dangerous persons and situations.

One of our three impact areas at Youthprise is "health and safety," so it is extremely concerning to us that there are young people in our state who are unable to access this important tool for enhancing their personal safety. HF 2665 would amend Minnesota's HRO law to allow an emancipated youth to petition for an HRO or, if the court deems it necessary, to allow a responsible adult age of 25 or older to petition the court for an HRO on behalf of the emancipated youth who is being victimized.

Youthprise believes this is a straightforward, commonsense change to state law that will boost the safety of a group of young people who already face many barriers that can increase their vulnerability. This bill is an important step toward making Minnesota a state where every young person is safe and secure. We urge you to make it a priority during this legislative session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcus Pope".

Marcus Pope
President