

MISSION MOMENT

Women of the ELCA & Lutheran Office for Public Policy Gather As Beloved Community Around the Safe Harbor Human Trafficking Bill

By Amelia Gonzales, LOPPW Intern



The Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin joined together to hold a rally on youth are impacted by sex trafficking on September 24. The day began at Messiah Lutheran Church in Madison. We then went to the capitol, equipped with information and faith-based responses to advocate for the Safe Harbor bill. AB 41/AB 49 would move Wisconsin ahead in directing trafficked youth to receiving human services rather than criminalizing them.

We heard from Morgan Meadows, M. Ed., Survivor of sex trafficking and consultant in leadership and survivor advocacy, Door County; Bishop Jim Arends, La Crosse Area Synod; Jen DeLeon, National WELCA Director for Justice; Dana World Patterson and Jay Reinke, Milwaukee Joint Task Force on Human Trafficking; and Representative Jill Billings, District 95.

The Safe Harbor Rally was a chance to bring together people to support a very important piece of legislation that is currently making its way through the system. For someone who has been an advocate for human trafficking for three years now, the rally was a truly an amazing experience to be a part of. Not only was it great to hear the amazing speakers from the Milwaukee Human Trafficking Task Force and a survivor of human trafficking, Morgan Meadows, but also to have the chance to speak to legislators about why the Safe Harbor Bill is needed in the state of Wisconsin. The day also gave me joy to see people come to the rally who perhaps weren't familiar with the bill but were willing to learn more about it and to understand why it was needed.

The rally was also taught us why certain legislators weren't in support of the Safe Harbor Bill and how to be that person to perhaps further educate legislators

Amelia Gonzales joined the Lutheran Office for Public Policy as a graduate student in social work at UW-Madison in September. She comes to us via the university's 4W-STREETS (Social Transformation to End the Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking for Sex) program. Amelia is a recent graduate in social work and sociology from UW Oshkosh.

Thank you for your mission support that helps ministries like this happen!