2019 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 73

November 8, 2019 – Introduced by Senators OLSEN, CARPENTER, BEWLEY, LARSON and L. TAYLOR, cosponsored by Representatives SNYDER, SARGENT, ANDERSON, BOWEN, CONSIDINE, DITTRICH, EMERSON, HESSELBEIN, KULP, MILROY, MURSAU, PETRYK, SHANKLAND, SINICKI, SPREITZER, SUBECK, TAUCHEN, C. TAYLOR, Vining, VRUWINK and BROSTOFF. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

Relating to: proclaiming November 2019 as Runaway Prevention Month in Wisconsin.

Whereas, in the United States, November is recognized as National Runaway Prevention Month; and

Whereas, one in seven young people between ages 10 and 18 will run away from home, leading to millions who runaway each year because of severe family dysfunction, physical or sexual abuse, or their parents are unable or unwilling to fulfill parental responsibilities; and

Whereas, if all of America’s 1.6 to 2.8 million runaways lived in one city, it would be the fifth largest city in the United States; and

Whereas, runaway youth are often homeless and unaccompanied, lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; and
Whereas, a 2018 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that the number of unaccompanied homeless youth and children is estimated to be 36,361; and

Whereas, according to the Department of Public Instruction's data on homeless children and youth in Wisconsin, 2,450 enrolled students are homeless and unaccompanied, and 18,854 are homeless; and

Whereas, statistically, runaway and unaccompanied homeless youth are at higher risk for experiencing sexual or physical abuse, being targeted for sex and labor trafficking, and abusing alcohol and drugs, which means there is a positive social return on investing in ending youth homelessness; and

Whereas, the runaway and homeless youth crisis is a problem that is solvable with awareness, education, and evidence-based services and programming; and

Whereas, by acknowledging there is a housing and runaway and homeless youth crisis that is sweeping our state and our country, we can bring visibility to the youth facing these dangerous circumstances every day and work to provide meaningful resources and services to youth who need them; and

Whereas, recognizing Runaway Prevention Month is a key first step in raising awareness about the runaway and homeless youth crisis in Wisconsin, educating the public about their role in ending youth homelessness, and supporting young people who have run away or are at risk of running away; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin Legislature do hereby proclaim November 2019 as Runaway Prevention Month in the state of Wisconsin; and, be it further
Resolved, That the legislature calls upon our citizens to learn more about housing insecurity and how they can play an important role in addressing the homeless and unaccompanied youth crisis.