



February 15, 2016

The Honorable Rick Scott  
Executive Office of the Governor  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Open Doors Funding Initiative

Dear Governor Scott,

I write on behalf of the 365 members of the Women's Giving Alliance, a collective giving organization and an initiative of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, to urge you to support the Open Doors Funding Initiative to supply mental health and other support services to the child victims of sex trafficking. These services are urgently needed and are at present sorely lacking in our service delivery zone, and across much of the state.

Our organization has been funding mental health prevention and treatment services for girls in our area for the last 5 years. We were as surprised as some of our grantee agencies were to discover that many of the girls who were in need of public mental health services, both in and out of the criminal justice system, had been trafficked, sometimes more than once. These girls have been bought, sold and brutalized, often for years. As you can imagine, once recovered, they are in need of many services, including counseling. Open Doors envisions a statewide network that would support the survivors of trafficking regardless of the "door" through which they enter the system—criminal justice, DCF, or any other state or local agency.

Our members have spent a good deal of time learning about the issue of trafficking in Florida. When we visited Tallahassee two weeks ago to speak with legislators and their staff about Open Doors, we were pleased to find that there seems to be broad support for this initiative. Funding this pilot project will go a long way toward improving the lives of children who have been trafficked, and will build upon the success of the Safe Harbor legislation. We hope you will give it your full support.

Respectfully,

Paula Liang  
President

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