

March 28, 2022

Chair Jennifer Schultz
Human Services Finance & Policy Committee
Via electronic delivery

Re: Support for HF3568 (Modifying Housing Support Countable Income)

Chair Schultz and Members of the Committee:

Project for Pride in Living supports HF3568, a bill that reforms our state's Housing Support program to create stronger pathways to stable housing.

PPL builds, manages, and services 1,600 units of affordable housing throughout the Twin Cities serving low-income and formerly homeless individuals and families. We see every day, the most effective way to promote long-term self-reliance is by stabilizing the economics of a household and providing affordable housing. Last year, PPL's Housing Support program served 168 individuals and 93% of individuals maintained stable housing for 24 months or more.

Housing Support is an established, statewide program that has a proven track record of helping thousands of Minnesotans move out of homelessness and into stable housing each year. It is one of the state's best tools to support people exiting homelessness, but it is not without challenges.

Housing Support recipients with income are required to make monthly payments towards the cost of their apartment, but because of the way different income sources are counted, SSI recipients can be forced to pay their full benefit towards their apartment costs, minus a \$111 personal allowance. This can equate to nearly 90% of their monthly income.

The burden of this obligation holds tenants in extreme poverty and forces them to choose between paying their monthly Housing Support payment or paying other necessary expenses. For some Housing Support-eligible individuals, it's enough to cause them to decline the benefit entirely, choosing instead to stay in shelter or on the streets.

HF3568 would reform Housing Support income calculations to allow those with SSI benefits to keep more of their personal income. This would remove a barrier that currently prevents individuals from exiting homelessness, while also supporting current tenants in building skills and savings for greater housing and financial stability.

As our state works to address the current housing and homelessness crisis, HF3568 offers a necessary reform to improve outcomes for those in need. We ask for your support.

Sincerely,



Paul Williams
President and CEO
Project for Pride in Living

