

**Testimony on Behalf of Lisa Papp-Richards  
In Support of Rep. Lee's bill HF 4220  
Resident Protections in HUD and Low-Income Tax Facilities**

Members of the committee, my name is Lisa Papp-Richards. I live in Bemidji. I was one of the 4 unstoppable women last summer who stepped up and helped 45 vulnerable residents who were evicted suddenly from the Red Pines Estates a low-income housing unit because of structural problems at the building. The residents are mostly elderly, low-income, and have physical issues or mental issues.

This experience has been traumatizing for the residents and I am here to urge lawmakers to support the bill before you to provide more protections for residents in these units so that this nightmare situation never happens again.

With no plan in place to address an emergency there were major health and mental health challenges. That first weekend one resident had to stop stem cell treatments, another could not go to dialysis, another resident needed to have a pacemaker, and many were falling and ending up in the hospital without their medical equipment and trips to the hospital in the ambulance.

Many residents understandably were worrying about a place to live, food, how they were going to pay for the hotel, storage units, and meds, and uncertain how they were going to get their things out of the apartment. And there was little help from the building owner, manager, and city inspector and sadly, the County kept fighting with the City Council that it was their issue, not theirs.

Not only was there no plan for an emergency evacuation but these residents were threatened in their lease that if they complained 3 times they would be evicted. There must be a way that residents can complain and not worry about retaliation.

We became "On Call" for these people 24/7. The 4 main volunteers did the weekend meals out of our own pockets along with other stuff they needed. And the community came through: we raised money from a GOFUNDME and received grants from The United Way, Prime West, and the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and Dr. Diane Pittman owner of True North Health Care paid for medical equipment out of her own pocket and did house visits at no expense to the residents.

Now nearly 8 months later poses additional challenges:

- Several residents who found housing must be rehoused because two more apartment buildings are having issues and Residents are still worried about where they are going to live come August when their grants expire.

Red Pine Estate was the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> apartment building to close within 1.5 yr. I am worried this situation could happen again because it's happening now and we are in need of 178 units. So, I ask you to pass the HF 4220 bill to protect our loved ones so they can live their best lives.