

3/8/2022



RE: Support reforms to Housing Support income calculations (HF3568)

Dear Chair Gomez and members of the committee,

Housing support is one of the state's most essential tools in moving people experiencing homelessness, especially unsheltered, to housing with services. As a disability program, it allows providers to meet the needs of people facing substance abuse and long-term mental health issues in project-based or scattered-site housing in the private rental market.

As Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, we operate over 600 homes, many of them supportive housing for people transitioning out of homelessness, and utilize this vital tool. We currently have/in development over 400 housing support units in our project-based settings.

But, the program does not treat people fairly with SSI. The program has a unique calculation for the SSI "client obligation," which is much higher than other housing support residents with different income sources. Often, SSI residents lose 90% of their income to housing support "client obligation."

This unfair treatment of SSI precipitants leaves them little money to live on month-to-month. It hurts their quality of life and does not give them the ability to save and invest in anything other than their basic needs. We see many people who need supportive housing and who are on SSI refuse our housing because they do not want the majority of their income to be taken.

It is widely recognized that no individual or family should pay over 30% of their income towards housing. Reforming housing support for SSI recipients to this common standard will directly improve our residents' lives and create pathways for housing stability for more Minnesotans.

Please support HF 3568 (Her) / SF3417 (Utke) to reform Housing Support income calculations to allow those with SSI benefits to retain more of their income

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Helvick Anderson".

Ben Helvick Anderson
Vice President of Policy and Organizing
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative