



March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Howard and Members of the Committee,

The Equity in Place coalition is writing to express our strong support for Representative María Isa Pérez-Vega's HF 2704, which would grant tenants across the state the affirmative right to organize for the stability, safety, and dignity of their homes.

Equity in Place is a diverse group of strategic partners from organizations led by people of color and housing advocacy organizations. We believe that everyone in Minnesota deserves to live where they want to live and have access to opportunity.

We know our state is stronger when families, children and workers can put down roots in the neighborhoods they call home. But housing stability is still a far-away dream for many of the 620,000 renter households in Minnesota who all too often are exploited by their landlords. Tenants are increasingly likely to deal with an out-of-state corporation as their landlord, and their ability to request timely repairs, negotiate rent adjustments, and ultimately engage on equal terms has diminished.

HF 2704 provides a tenant empowerment tool designed to ensure tenants can organize against unfair or illegal practices, without fear that they will be wrongfully displaced. Many Equity in Place member organizations have provided support to tenants facing retaliation for asserting their rights and in some cases, even experienced the intimidation firsthand. In 2022, HOME Line's hotline received 485 calls related to retaliation and fears of it happening. Recently, the New American Development Center worked with renters who were informally evicted after requesting basic maintenance.

Equity in Place urges you to vote YES on HF 2704. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

African Career, Education and Resource Inc (ACER)

The Alliance

Center for Urban & Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota

CloseKnit

Community Stabilization Project

Harrison Neighborhood Association
Hope Community
Housing Justice Center
Jewish Community Action
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
MN STEP (Standing Together to End Poverty)
Minnesota Youth Collective
Native American Community Development Institute
New American Development Center
Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association
Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza
Urban Homeworks
West Side Community Organization