



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

April 22, 2020

Representative Alice Hausman  
Housing Finance & Policy Division, Chair  
via electronic delivery

RE: Support for HF4541 (Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program)

Chair Hausman and Members of the Committee:

Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis supports HF4541, which would invest \$100 million in the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP). FHPAP is critical to our state's plan to prevent and end homelessness, and its need has been compounded by COVID-19.

Catholic Charities offers rapid re-housing (RRH) and prevention programs as part of our mission to serve those most in need. While RRH helps people experiencing short-term homelessness of less than one year find and maintain housing, prevention helps those who are currently in housing but at risk of losing it due to job loss or financial hardship. Both are supported by FHPAP and are seeing a greater demand for resources as a result of the pandemic. As shared by our prevention program staff:

*"We have a limited direct assistance budget for rent, late fees, court fees and utilities to help prevent people from losing their housing and becoming homeless. In the past month, many of the households we serve who had gained employment have seen job loss or reduction, causing greater need for ongoing rental assistance. This has left us with very little funds to assist new clients, of which we receive 20-30 calls a month and can only help 1-2."*

Temporarily suspending evictions also is an important part of the COVID-19 response, as it helps ensure people have a safe environment in which to stay in place. Rent will continue to accrue, however, and without aid, many individuals are likely to find themselves unable to pay when the peacetime emergency ends. Funding for housing assistance by way of FHPAP is necessary to support renters and landlords and ensure individuals still have a safe place to call home as we move toward recovery. On behalf of those we serve, we ask for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Underwood'.

Wendy Underwood  
Vice President of Social Justice Advocacy and Engagement  
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis