



March 7, 2023

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Homes for All coalition, we write in support of HF 1858, which will create a Safe Harbor Shelter and Housing grant program. Homes for All represents over 270 organizations across the state that advocate for safe, accessible, stable, and affordable housing across the housing continuum. Our coalition represents the full continuum of housing, from services for people experiencing homelessness, to permanent supportive housing, to affordable rental options, to homeownership opportunities for Minnesotans.

Ensuring we have safe, affordable housing for the most vulnerable Minnesotans is a critical piece of our coalition's work. HF 1858 creates specific funding to provide emergency shelter and supportive housing for some of Minnesota's most vulnerable young people, those who have experienced or at-risk of experiencing sexual exploitation.

Consider the scope of the problem below:

- A 2019 study found that 5,000 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Minnesota have experienced sexual exploitation, a number which is gravely undercounted.
- Research has shown that 68% of young people who have been trafficked or engaged in survival sex did so while experiencing homelessness.
- 22% of young people who have experienced homelessness were approached for paid sex on their first night of homelessness.

We can and must provide the housing and homelessness services needed to support young people who have already or are at-risk of experiencing sexual exploitation and trafficking. On behalf of our entire Homes for All coalition, we urge you to pass HF 1385.

Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Best,

Michael Dahl  
Public Policy Director, HOME Line  
Homes for All Policy Co-Chair

Annie Shapiro  
Advocacy Director, MinnCAP  
Homes for All Policy Co-Chair