

March 21, 2023.

The Honorable Michael Howard, Chair
Housing Finance and Policy Committee
473 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Howard and Members of the Committee:

The Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities currently has 140 student representatives across all colleges and majors, and we serve over 30,000 undergraduates who make up our student body. Our organization has been advocating for better student housing practices at the Capitol for over five years, and we have appreciated the support of this committee in pushing equitable housing practices for all tenants throughout the state. However, the creation of this committee and the duties delegated to it would not solve all of the issues students face as first-time renters.

As one of the main student voices advocating for better housing practices, we were surprised to learn about the creation of this bill as we were not consulted and have not heard from other student housing justice leaders about the creation of this task force. Had we been consulted about this task force, we would recommend more student voices. The duties of this task force also seem unclear, as we have been bringing forward legal changes needed to improve the experience of student tenants for years. The issues of student housing often deal with predatory practices from landlords, which then causes financial burdens that students already cannot afford due the high costs of college. If the current policy that we have been pushing for this Session passes, then some of the major issues that students face on-campus would be resolved.

This committee has always been receptive to the student experiences that we have shared, and we appreciate the efforts of Rep. Johnson to better serve student tenants. However, the lack of student consultation and the need for more student representation is why the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities is not in support of House File 2938.

Respectfully,

Siya Sakhardande

Siya Sakhardande, 2022-23 State Coordinator