

April 4, 2023

Dear Chair Gomez and Members of the Tax Committee,

My name is Amanda Woods. Thank you madam chair for the opportunity to speak for HF2335, the Bring it Home bill. I live in Cranberry Ridge, which is a deeply affordable housing building run by Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborate and Interfaith Outreach.

I support creating a new Minnesota voucher program created in this bill because I have personally seen the transformational impact vouchers have. I have three kids, and we have experienced housing instability and homelessness over the last eight years.

What changed all of this is when I received a voucher connected to my unit at Cranberry Ridge in Plymouth. I was able to move into a three-bedroom, two-bath unit that provided enough space and stability for my family. My kids now go to Wayzata schools, and it has a big impact on their lives. My youngest daughter is in first grade and after missing half of kindergarten, she started not being able to read or write. Now she is completely caught up. Now my girl can read a whole book and write her name. My middle schooler has special education needs, and having a stable home has improved his emotional and social skills. He now had the confidence to be in the same classroom as his peers. My oldest son now gets to just be a high schooler, hanging out with friends and playing on the football team.

All of this is possible for my family because of having a voucher. Only paying 30% of my income allows me to focus, save and plan out my career. I am able to provide more my kids. My kids had to miss so many birthdays and holidays because all my income before was just paying to try and get a roof over our head. Now we celebrate birthdays, wash our clothes when we want to, and keep to growing boys feed and clean.

I want everyone to have a voucher because they will be able to care for their kids, and themselves and really live life. Before we were in surviving mode, and now, because of a voucher, we are able to live.

I support creating a new metro sales tax to provide these vouchers for more people. It is worth all of us paying a little more to provide support for those who need it the most.

I have seen this transformation in my family, and I want everyone in Minnesota to have this opportunity. We need to pass this bill for families I have encountered in the shelters and hotels which I know are not as lucky as I am. There are not enough vouchers, and too many families are living like I was.

Let's Bring it Home.

Sincerely,

Amanda Woods