



February 1, 2023

Chair Howard and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express support for HF 302 which includes a policy change to address the critical lack of affordable, accessible, inclusive housing for people with disabilities in Minnesota. Similar to the work of disability advocate, Judy Moe, in the City of Richfield, this legislation will address physical and sensory barriers in housing. This policy change will ensure that projects utilizing housing infrastructure bonds include units that are more accessible for people with disabilities – including veterans and older adults.

Currently, the building code for the most accessible housing units still makes a roll-in shower optional. For people with disabilities who use a wheelchair, this makes finding truly accessible housing nearly impossible. For people with sensory accessibility needs, many housing projects do not currently have sensory accessible features. This eliminates many choices in housing for people with disabilities, and despite their desire to live in their own home, they may have to turn to a less independent, provider-controlled housing option due to the lack of affordable, accessible housing in the community.

The housing crisis is exacerbated for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), veterans, and the fast-growing aging population. BIPOC, veterans, and older adults have a higher prevalence of disabilities than the general population, so the need for affordable, accessible, inclusive housing options is even more critical for them.

When we use state dollars to build housing, we must ensure we are building housing that works for all people. This legislation creates a shared definition of accessibility and supports developers and builders to create more inclusive homes in Minnesota.

Thank you, Chair Howard, for carrying HF 302. We urge committee members to support this bill to ensure Minnesotans with accessibility needs can find affordable housing that is also accessible.

Sincerely,

ACCRA Homecare
 Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
 Autism Society of Minnesota
 Catholic Charities Twin Cities
 Homes for All Coalition
 Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center
 Minnesota Autistic Alliance
 Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance

Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
 Minnesota Council on Disability
 Minnesota Social Service Association
 Multicultural Autism Action Network
 Proof Alliance
 Richfield Disability Advocacy Partnership
 The Arc Minnesota
 The Arc Northland