



MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
ISLAMIC CENTER OF MINNESOTA

122 West Franklin Avenue
Suite 204
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: (612) 870-3670
info@jrlc.org
www.jrlc.org

April 15, 2021

Chair Moran and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition submits this letter in support of expansion of the Renter's Credit in House File 991. Increasing the amount of the Renter's Credit directly helps low income Minnesotans and makes our tax system more fair.

In our churches, synagogues and mosques, we see the financial challenges these individuals and families face. We hear from those struggling to make rent and car payments, to buy healthy food, to meet basic needs and to pay overdue bills. We know that the Renter's Credit is often used to address these very issues - for food, medicine, school supplies, clothing, car repairs and other basic household expenses. Many of these expenditures are made directly in our communities, helping our local economy.

The Renter's Credit makes a significant difference to these individuals and households. A significant percentage of those eligible for the Renter's Credit are senior citizens and people with disabilities. A majority of those eligible are low wage earners who face rental costs that rise faster than wages. These are also the Minnesotans hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our current lack of affordable housing creates financial stress for these low income Minnesotans – in many Minnesota counties, one in five renters pay 50% or more of their household income for rent.

The Center for Disease Control has directly linked the federal Earned Income Tax Credit to better health outcomes for low income individuals – especially for infants and mothers. The ability to purchase diapers, warm clothes, healthy food, and medicine are invaluable.

Those Minnesotans eligible for the Renter's Credit pay a disproportionate amount of their household income on sales and other taxes. Increasing the Renter's Credit helps to address this inequity.

We encourage you to approve expansion of the Renter's Credit as part of the tax omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

Anne Krisnik, Executive Director