



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

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February 5, 2021

Representative Alice Hausman, Chair
House Housing Finance and Policy Division
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Support for H.F. 398, H.F. 399 & H.F. 400

Chair Hausman and Members of the Committee:

Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis is happy to offer its support for H.F. 398, H.F. 399 and H.F. 400. These bills would enhance and protect tenants' rights statewide, and we thank Representative Her and her coauthors for their leadership on these proposals.

Catholic Charities is a leading provider of social service programs throughout the Twin Cities, serving over 23,000 men, women, children, and families annually, and we are strategically focused on achieving and maintaining housing stability for those most in need. While we are often recognized for our emergency shelter programs, we also manage over 900 residential units for single adults and older youth, and we support nearly 300 additional clients in community-based rental units. Most of these individuals have experienced long-term homelessness, and all are working every day towards greater housing stability.

As both a service provider and landlord, we believe the provisions of these bills collectively promote higher quality and more stable housing for tenants across the state. Ensuring emergency repairs are fixed in a timely manner is necessary to maintain safe and dignified housing. Allowing for termination of a lease for residents needing to move to certain medical facilities supports health and economic stability and may make units more quickly available to prospective tenants affected by the current housing shortage. Transparency of fees is critical to ensuring current and prospective tenants do not find themselves unexpectedly unable to afford their rent and at risk of eviction or homelessness. We are acutely aware of the impact of the latter, as our staff have assisted clients in finding housing, only to learn at lease signing that undisclosed fees put a unit beyond their limited income. In worst cases, this has resulted in individuals returning to homelessness.

H.F. 398, H.F. 399 and H.F. 400 provide important opportunities for tenants and landlords to achieve and support housing stability, and individuals currently experiencing or at-risk of homelessness are particularly likely to benefit. We appreciate your efforts to engage both tenants and landlords in advancing these policy solutions. We look forward to the ongoing discussion and ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Lorna Schmidt, Public Policy Manager
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Catholic Charities serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community.