

February 15, 2023

Chair Tina Liebling  
House Health Finance & Policy Committee

**Re: Support for HF732 / SF992 (Modifying Housing Support Income Definitions)**

Chair Liebling and Members of the Committee:

As organizations with shared interest in ending homelessness and promoting housing stability, we write to express our strong support for reforms to Housing Support income definitions as proposed in HF732 (Her) / SF992 (Boldon) and included in the Governor’s budget recommendations.

Housing Support is an established, statewide program with a proven track record of moving thousands of Minnesotans out of homelessness each year. It is one of the state’s best tools to respond to the homelessness crisis, but reforms are needed to ensure we’re supporting positive and equitable outcomes for those in need.

Housing Support recipients with income are required to make monthly payments towards the cost of their apartment. Under current policy, individuals with “unearned income”—which includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Retirement Survivors & Disability Insurance (RSDI), veterans benefits, Tribal per capita payments, and even unemployment insurance income and child support—can be forced to pay their full benefit towards their apartment costs, minus a \$121 personal allowance.

This financial burden can equate to as much as 90% of one’s income every month and holds individuals in extreme poverty, forcing them to choose between paying their monthly Housing Support payment or paying for other necessities like a phone, transportation, clothing and emergency expenses. For some Housing Support-eligible individuals, it’s enough to cause them to decline the assistance entirely and choose to stay in shelter or on the streets instead. Others face a perpetual threat of eviction and a return to homelessness.

This bill is based on the premise that stable, affordable housing means not paying more than 30% of one’s income on rent. This change will help more individuals exit homelessness, help those with housing keep it, and support those working towards program independence by allowing them to build the skills and savings needed to successfully transition off it.

HF732 / SF992 presents an opportunity to improve housing and homelessness outcomes while putting money back in the pockets of the lowest-income Minnesotans. We ask for your support.

Sincerely,

218 Housing  
2nd Chance Mentoring  
Agate Housing and Services  
Align Minneapolis  
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation  
Avenues for Youth  
Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota  
Catholic Charities Twin Cities

Chum  
Clare Housing  
Divine Konnections Inc.  
Duffy Development  
Esperanza United (formerly Casa de Esperanza:  
National Latin@ Network)  
Greater Twin Cities United Way  
Haven Housing

*(List of supporters continues on second page)*

Hearth Connection  
Hennepin County  
Hmong Public Health Association  
Homes for All  
Housing Matters  
Institute for Community Alliances  
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.  
Launch Ministry  
Legal Services Advocacy Project  
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable  
Housing (MICAH)  
Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans  
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless  
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center  
Minnesota Social Service Association  
NAMI Minnesota  
Olmsted County  
Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless  
Our Saviour's Community Services  
Our Spring Lake Store  
Partners for Housing - Mankato, MN  
Project for Pride in Living  
Radias Health  
Rainbow Health Minnesota  
Range Transitional Housing, Inc.  
RS EDEN  
Simpson Housing Services, Inc.  
Solid Ground  
Start Today Hennepin  
Street Voices of Change  
The American Legion Department of Minnesota  
The Arc Minnesota  
The Link  
Tubman  
United Community Action Partnership  
YouthLink  
Youthprise