

Dear Chair Howard, Vice Chair Agbaje and Members of the Mn House Housing and Finance Committee

I am actively supporting HF 2492 (Economic development and housing challenge program; schools added as eligible recipients, and funding requirements added) for the following reasons: As a cardiologist, I know that you and I are healthy not so much because of the health services that I provide, but because we have an education, and with that education we can generate adequate income. HF 2492 increases the types of organization that can apply for funding to teach students construction skills.

Some of the students who benefit from this program are homeless or housing insecure. When a homeless young person is given an opportunity to participate in a program to construct houses, they can get that education and their life expectancy deficit of 20 to 30 years is erased. Programs in which young people learn very marketable, real world skills puts them on a path to health and well-being.

Moreover, as you each know, Minnesota urgently needs more permanent, truly affordable housing for low income families and families experiencing homelessness.

Students who learn to build homes will be acquiring the skills that give them *respect, dignity, meaning and purpose*—critical building blocks for well-being that many youth - homeless or not lack.

After participating in these programs a young person will be able to drive by a home and say, "I built that! I made it possible for that family to own a home! I contributed to my community!" The power of these words to create well-being cannot be overstated.

Please support this change in the law, allowing high schools to apply for funds to build homes for low income people. Passing this bill, you will not only increase the stock of low cost, high quality housing, you will change, for the better and forever, the lives of young men and women.

Thank you.

Thomas E. Kottke, MD, MSPH

571 Otis Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55104

Home: 651 330 4782

Mobile: 612 240 5811