

March 14, 2023

Representative Michael Howard, Chair
House Housing Finance and Policy Committee

Representative Howard,

My name is Cora McCorvey, and I am the former Executive Director of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA). I led the agency from 1991 to 2017, and during those years, MPHA built a significant scattered site family housing portfolio. At that time, it was our intent to provide more choice for MPHA residents while also deconcentrating poverty by moving low-income families into neighborhoods across the city. Our hope was that by folding families into the fabric of neighborhoods we could reduce the stigma attached to public housing residents while also increasing opportunities for families to thrive.

Strengthening the family housing portfolio was incredibly challenging. The agency was met with resistance in neighborhood after neighborhood for those it sought to rehouse families in—largely from white homeowners who felt strongly in their opposition to moving mostly black public housing families into their neighborhoods. This work was anything but easy, but we knew it was important.

Fast forward to today, and you see MPHA's family housing portfolio working as intended. The program helps low-income families have a stable roof over their head, helps residents get access to better, higher-paying jobs, and keeps kids in schools in great neighborhoods. The agency's data shows that of the current scattered site heads of household, 19 percent were employed when entering their new home. On average, these residents earned \$20,722 a year in income. Today, 67 percent of these residents are employed, earning an average of \$34,225 a year, with more than 60 percent of these residents' earned income increasing while in these homes. And of the 3,100 residents living in MPHA deeply affordable family homes, 55 percent of them are children under the age of 18.

Further, this portfolio has become a powerful tool to enable black homeownership in the Twin Cities, with an estimated 17 percent of families leaving these homes going on to purchase their own home. The homeownership gap for families of color in Minnesota is well documented, but these scattered site homes are a proven tool to help close that gap.

I urge lawmakers to support HF 2477 to send a one-time \$45 million cash grant to MPHA to help the agency overcome decades of underfunding from the federal government and to put these homes on the path to sustainability. This investment will benefit both the families currently living in these homes and the thousands of families who will live in them over the next 30 years. These families deserve nothing less from their elected leaders.

Respectfully Yours,



Cora McCorvey
Former Executive Director
Minneapolis Public Housing Authority