



home changes everything

April 4, 2023
Chair Gomez
Members of the House Tax Committee

Chair Gomez and members of the House Tax Committee,

My name is Steven Hardy, and I am writing to describe the importance of passing HF 2335 this year. I know the impact this bill could have on the lives of many people like me - especially through the creation of a state-based voucher program.

I was born and raised in Chicago, and when I was a young man, I got addicted to drugs. Since I was grown up, my parents didn't want me around the house. I was on my own.

I had a job working at a car wash, and I stole from my manager to support my habit. I had gotten myself into a rut, and that continued for a time. But I knew that it wasn't me. So in 2012, I decided to get out of that life. I called a friend, and he happened to be in St. Paul. I didn't know where that was at the time. But I got on a bus to Minnesota. And when I got here, I felt like a new man.

I didn't know that was just the beginning. I stayed with my friend for a couple of months, on his couch - but I was still homeless. I was still in the same predicament, but not on drugs. And that was the good thing.

It took a while, but I eventually found a stable home with Aeon. And I got connected with the GRH program, which gave me some money each month to help me be stable. In the process of getting sober, I had a chance to think. I decided to take advantage of the opportunity. I went outside every day, walked around. I stayed clean. And eventually, I was able to get my own apartment. Now, I am finally able to pay my own rent.

Having support through the GRH program helped me in a lot of ways. It helped me with my stability being off drugs, and it helped me find other things to do. My fiance Mary and I help in our community now, with events at our apartment building and with the food shelf.

Being where I am now – I would love for another person to feel the way I'm feeling. I want to thank you for supporting the state-based voucher program. And I hope you will keep supporting organizations like Aeon that are doing the work of managing and providing affordable housing. For me to be stable, those places must be stable first. I ask that you support and pass HF2335 this year:
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven Hardy