

Written testimony in support of HF399:

My name is Drew Mares, and I was asked to provide testimony about my recent experience with renting a unit here in the Saint Paul area. My partner and I have spent the last month looking at and touring different units to find one that we thought would be a good fit for us. We finally found a good unit within our budget with a monthly rent of \$1,095. We toured the unit and decided to go ahead and put our deposit down. After we had already put our deposit down we were presented with the lease for the unit which was 46 pages long. As I sat down to read through the lease I noticed that the rent amount was correct as well as a pet fee that we had agreed to pay since we have a cat. However, also on the lease that we were never told about was a \$9/month administrative fee for access to an online portal to pay our rent. As well as a carpet cleaning fee, which would fall under the category of a move out fee discussed before. For the carpet cleaning fee we were required to have the carpets in the unit professionally-cleaned and then provide a receipt to the landlord as proof that we had it done.

Following that if the carpets were not cleaned to the landlord's satisfaction, we could be charged an additional carpet cleaning fee for the landlord to hire another service and clean the carpets again. I got estimates from three different carpet cleaning businesses and they ranged in price from \$250 to \$400. Assuming the worst case scenario and the landlord wanted them cleaned a second time that would be almost an entire month's of rents in fees that we were never notified of before placing our security deposit. After learning about these fees as well as possibly others that were hidden among the 46 pages we decided not to move forward with that unit.

If these fees would have been made transparent upfront or at the very least even if they were mentioned without including a dollar amount, we would have most likely decided not to choose this unit, and continued our search. For us personally it was kind of heartbreaking to finally find a unit that we liked and then find out afterwards that the rent we were told upfront was not what the actual cost in reality would be.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HF 399.