

January 31, 2023

Chair Peter Fischer
House Human Services Policy Committee

Re: Support for HF732 (Modifying Housing Support Income Definitions)

Chair Fischer 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 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 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,

2nd Chance Mentoring
Agate Housing and Services
Align Minneapolis
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Avenues for Youth
Catholic Charities Twin Cities
Chum
Clare Housing

Duffy Development
Esperanza United (formerly Casa de Esperanza:
National Latin@ Network)
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Haven Housing
Hennepin County
Homes for All
Housing Matters

(List of supporters continues on second page)

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
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 Link
Tubman
United Community Action Partnership
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