

May 7, 2025

Dear Chairs and Members of the Housing Finance Conference Committee:

Individuals with mental illnesses are significantly more vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness. Without stable housing, recovery from mental illnesses becomes unattainable. Many individuals thrive when they have access to ongoing, housing-linked services that help them maintain their homes, build positive relationships with property management and neighbors, and integrate into the community. There is an urgent need to sustain and expand permanent supportive housing.

Thank you for continuing to fund the much-needed Bridges program (rental assistance for people with mental illnesses and their families). We also appreciate the ability to use the affordable rental investment fund and for existing supportive housing. We urge you to take up the Senate language beginning on line 8.29, which allows the community stabilization program to be used to fund supportive housing preservation and recapitalization.

We encourage you to adopt the House language on Article 1 Subdivision 10, to provide more funding for the family homeless prevention and assistance program. Being homeless is a deeply traumatic experience that often incites or exacerbates mental illness symptoms. It has particularly long-lasting and harmful effects on children's mental health. Preventing children from becoming homeless is not only the moral thing to do – it will also save the state substantial funding down the road on emergency housing and mental health care.

We would like to express our support and gratitude for mandating the creation of “a strategy with the commissioner of human services to integrate the awarding of state service dollars to permanent supportive housing so that state service dollars can accompany capital awards in the consolidated request for proposal process” as part of the provision on a policy framework for stabilization of supportive housing. This could help supportive housing providers spend less time applying for supportive housing and more time providing it.

Finally, we sincerely hope that protection from source of income discrimination will be passed into law next year. Pouring money into rental vouchers won't do any good if Minnesotans cannot find a landlord that will accept them.

Thank you for your consideration and for your hard work this session,

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