

February 16, 2021

Chair Alice Hausman
453 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: H.F. 567

Dear Chair Hausman and House Housing Finance & Policy Committee Members:



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Minnesota Housing Partnership strongly supports the proposed investments in H.F. 567 to investigate and report on housing discrimination by conducting fair housing testing statewide. Testing is an effective tool to investigate housing market practices and document illegal housing discrimination, providing critical information to local, state and federal agencies such that appropriate action can be pursued for violations of fair housing law.

New investments are critical to enforcing the Fair Housing Act, in a state that routinely has one of the most extreme gaps in homeownership rates between white homebuyers and Black homebuyers. This funding will enhance Minnesota's ability to identify and to challenge the discriminatory housing practices that persist in the rental and sale of housing.

The 2018 Housing Task Force Report recommended investments to address exploitive practices by predatory landlords, described as a small minority of that group; predatory practices identified in the report include illegal discrimination, with examples provided by tenants of sexual harassment and other illegal practices. The report recommends improving and resourcing regulatory and inspection systems, such as complaint investigation. H.F. 567 supports this recommendation, by resourcing investigation through fair housing testing statewide. With these resources, Minnesota will be better equipped to take action against the minority of landlords that engage in predatory practices such as discrimination.

The A1 amendment is a welcome addition to H.F. 567, as it clarifies the bill's scope is consistent with protected classes identified by federal and state anti-discrimination law. MHP supports, as well, ensuring that housing discrimination based on use of public assistance, such as housing assistance, is a practice prohibited by Minnesota's Human Rights Act.

MHP is a housing non-profit that strengthens development capacity and promotes public policy change to expand opportunity, especially for those with the greatest need. MHP provides capacity building for rural and Native communities throughout the United States, produces original research, and advocates for policies that advance affordable housing and strengthen communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne Mavity".

Anne Mavity
Executive Director

See [2018 Minnesota Housing Task Force Report](#)