

March 14, 2023

Representative Mike Howard
Chair of the Committee on Housing Finance and Policy

Re: HF 917, as amended—Agbaje: Residential housing eviction provisions amended, and residential housing eviction summons and complaint provisions amended; Landlord & Tenant Omnibus bill

Dear Chair Howard and Members,

Safe, secure and sustained affordable housing is a critical foundation for stability in all other areas of life, such as employment, education, and health. Access to affordable housing is vital for the wellbeing of all residents of Minneapolis. In particular, it is critical that barriers to securing stable and affordable housing are overcome. Recognizing that an individual's housing needs may change over time or due to circumstance, all parts of the housing continuum are important to maintain, invest in and support. It is also important for property owners to maintain rental homes in safe and healthy conditions for tenants and for there to be fair business practices in rental housing.

Minneapolis renter households are the majority in Minneapolis, growing by more than 12,500 households (a 16% increase) between 2000 and 2018—a reversed decade-long trend of majority-owner households. It is critical that residents and families have the rights, resources, and information they need. To protect our most vulnerable residents and allow access to needed healthcare, tenants must be allowed to break their lease, with a two-month notice, if they must move to a medically-assisted or accessible housing unit.

Minnesota law states that landlords must give tenants “reasonable notice” to enter their apartments for non-emergency reasons. A 24-hour notice from a landlord, at a minimum, is necessary, appropriate, and reasonable—especially before entering a tenant's home. In addition, an expansion of emergency issues beyond what is listed in state law is needed to allow an expedited process for renters to enforce their right to a safe home.

Lastly, establishing a source of income protection for renters is important, as we know that discrimination occurs when a landlord refuses to rent to a housing applicant because of a person's form of income—housing assistance. Source of income protection would increase access to housing and freedom of housing choice as well as increase the usage of rental assistance, a scarce and valuable resource.

These tenant protection bills will positively benefit renters not only in the City of Minneapolis, but across the state. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these important pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,



Elfric K. Porte, II.
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