

HENNEPIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 31, 2023

Chair Peter Fischer
551 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Fischer,

I write to express Hennepin County Board of Commissioners' support for HF 732 (Her)/SF XXX (Baldon) – a bill to modify Housing Support Income Definitions. In fact, increasing state resources to support safe and stable housing for all individuals and families, is Hennepin County's top legislative priority and this bill is a critical example of how the state of Minnesota can lead.

While the Housing Support program serves as a high-impact resource that has assisted thousands in exiting homelessness in Hennepin County and across Minnesota, the structure leaves people who are receiving Social Security Income and veteran's benefits to pay almost 90% of their income toward their housing. Too often, this requirement traps people in poverty, or leads others to refuse housing – even while experiencing homelessness – or to leave their housing in order to preserve financial flexibility.

In 2021, Hennepin County partnered with C4 Innovations on their 'Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities' action research project. C4 conducted listening sessions with people with lived experience of homelessness and heard a consensus that existing housing programs were not fully meeting the needs of people in crisis. In particular, the limited amount of income that people retain if their housing is funded through the Housing Support program was highlighted as a major challenge that keeps people in a cycle of poverty and prevents people from saving money and increasing their self-reliance.

Hennepin County fully supports the proposed reforms of Housing Support as these changes will better meet the needs of people with disabilities who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness in our community. As the largest political subdivision of the state, we are mandated by statute to ensure residents are healthy, protected and safe, self-reliant, assured due process, and mobile. This bill, coupled with further state investment, will allow more residents the access to the stable, affordable, and dignified housing we all deserve.

Thank you for your leadership,



Irene Fernando, Chair
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners

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