

February 16, 2023

To: Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 732



Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members,

Founded by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in 1946, The Arc Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes and protects the human rights of individuals with IDD, supporting them and their families in a lifetime of full inclusion and participation in their communities. We are a chapter of The Arc of the United States, the largest national community-based organization advocating for people with IDD and their families.

The Arc Minnesota strongly supports HF 732 authored by Rep. Her and brought forward by Catholic Charities Twin Cities. This proposal would allow people accessing the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to keep more than \$121 a month after paying their contribution for housing through Housing Support. The \$121 Personal Needs Allowance is insufficient in meeting basic living needs, it prevents people from attaining housing and financial stability, and it forces people into chronic poverty. If people do not have funds to pay for transportation, phone services, employment expenses, emergency expenses and other needs—they are more likely to remain poor, not transition away from Housing Support, or even experience another episode of homelessness.

The Housing Support program can be an important way to access housing for low-income individuals with disabilities who want to live in the community. It is an important alternative to more expensive options like shelters or institutional placement that many individuals want to avoid. Housing Support has proven to be very successful for individuals in transitioning from homelessness to housing stability and we want to ensure we remove additional barriers to financial stability. In the future, the Housing Support program infrastructure could be utilized for additional tenancy-based subsidies that would benefit people who need affordable housing.

Individuals accessing the SSI program are among the lowest income people in our community. HF 732 allows them to keep more of their income so that they do not have to make the difficult choice between paying rent and other basic living needs. HF 732 would ensure people do not have to pay more than 30% of their income for housing—aligning with definitions of affordable housing.

The Arc Minnesota urges the committee to pass HF 732 and help more people on SSI to be able to access Housing Support and also have funds to pay for their basic living needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Ellen Baudler, Director of Housing Services

Julia Burkstaller, Public Policy Director