



February 3, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Hon. Aisha Gomez
Chair, Preventing Homelessness Division
Minnesota House of Representatives

RE: Support for H.F. 42 (Howard) (Emergency Services Program, Isolation Spaces and Housing Supports)

Chair Gomez and Members of the Committee:

We write to express our support for appropriating additional funding to combat homelessness. The need is urgent. According to our partners at Catholic Charities Twin Cities, the unsheltered population in the Twin Cities increased 50 percent between 2019 and 2020 and increased 32 percent in Greater Minnesota over that same period. COVID-19 has likely accelerated these trends and has created the additional need to isolate the homeless who test COVID-positive. With the potential for an eviction crisis and further economic downturn, putting the infrastructure in place to meet the looming challenge should be a priority, even in a very tight budget year.

When ensuring a sufficient safety net, there could be few things more crucial than providing shelter to the most truly destitute among us. In the Catholic tradition, sheltering the homeless is considered a basic act of charity and a core work of mercy. We believe it is our responsibility to meet this need and we work to live up to this call. In a non-COVID year, some parishes, such as the Cathedral of St. Paul, even provide emergency shelter within their buildings.

Catholic Charities and other direct service providers offer crucial emergency shelter services and do so primarily with private contributions from friends and ministry partners. But charities alone cannot meet the need. Members of our Catholic Advocacy Network from around the state who work or volunteer in shelters have communicated with legislators that their facilities are at capacity. Minnesota needs a stable source of funding for services on the front lines of the work to protect basic human dignity. In this case, it is no stretch to say that the funding saves lives.

Please pass approve the funding requests in H.F. 42. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to all Minnesotans.

Respectfully yours,

Jason Adkins
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