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Greetings Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jordon Eunison-Chisti, and I am the Executive Director of Life House located in Duluth. For over 32 years, Life House has been working with homeless and street-wise youth ages 14 to 24 throughout the Northeast Region and beyond. We are the primary access point for homeless young people trying to obtain housing. As someone who was homeless as a youth, I am acutely aware of the struggles our youth face.

We provide wraparound supportive services at no-cost. We have a Mental Health and Wellness team from licensed clinical social workers to licensed alcohol and drug counselors, a licensed teacher to support young adults with their academic credentials, we employ youth on-site to learn job skills, and we operate the only Drop-in Youth Center in our area.

Life House is a data-driven organization. We know of the 860 young people accessing our wraparound supportive services that: 60% are Indigenous, Black or Multiracial, 30% self-identify as LGBTQ+; 57% have experienced some form of abuse; and 43% are struggling with mental health concerns.

My staff of over 40 people are the young peoples' trustworthy adults in their lives, we are their family.

In our Community Housing Program last year, we served 487 youth, completed 256 needs assessments where 182 young people are now on the waitlist for housing. We also know that 80% of the youth in our housing program are connected to needed services in the community, 96% have maintained housing stability for over 6 months, 83% have increased their income, and 63% are working on recovering from substance misuse.

I also want to note that we receive funding from the Homeless Youth Act to support our work I just mentioned in providing these vital and lifesaving services. House File 2008 provides an additional critical component to



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interrupting the cycles of housing instability and a legacy of poverty amongst our young people. By providing underserved young adults direct cash and documenting how this impacts their lives, this research based pilot project provides us an opportunity to witness and be a part of creating a pathway out of homelessness for young people.

This bill bolsters how we work alongside them to pursue their dreams in life. Most young people who access our supportive services are with us for 5, 8, or 10 years. They have a team of people around them who are engaged in their healing process in order to thrive. Again, we are their family. These young people are our future generations, our future leaders.

Please invest in our underserved young adults by supporting House File 2008.

Thank you for your time Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I appreciate your commitment to supporting our young people in our communities.