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January 18, 2023
Chair Noor
Members of the Human Services Finance Committee

Dear Chair Noor and members of the Human Services Finance committee,

Our Saviour's Community Services is writing to express our support for the Pathway Home Act bill (**HF444**). As an emergency shelter provider, we want to share more about these three aspects of the bill:

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

Minnesota needs more shelter beds across the state. We also need to invest in the shelters that already exist so that we can increase accessibility and safety, and ensure the sustainability of existing shelters. The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless has identified nearly \$200 million in capital needs statewide that would create or preserve 3,400 shelter spaces – including ours – the Our Saviour's Housing Emergency Shelter.

\$40 million in 2024/25 and \$70 million in 2026/27 for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)

Services play a vital role in supporting individuals and families to exit homelessness. When we provide culturally responsive services we see improved outcomes for the people accessing our services through fewer restrictions and increased housing outcomes. We are grateful that HF444 includes our full request for ESP to support the work shelters and outreach teams provide in engaging our neighbors without housing.

Investments in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

HMIS is a web-based database that service providers throughout the state use to document data about households experiencing homelessness. As shelter providers, our staff log into HMIS every day. It is critical infrastructure that helps support data-driven decisions in our program and the various workgroups in which we participate. It also forms the data foundation for much of our institutional funding efforts from both public and private sources. Investments in HMIS help every participating provider push towards data-informed approaches to ending homelessness.

In addition to the above priorities, Our Saviour's Communities Services supports the remaining items included in the Pathway Home Act:

- \$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)
- Homeless Youth Act
- Homeless youth; chosen family grants

Thank you for considering and bringing forward the Pathway Home Act. Shelter saves lives. These investments would make a big difference for service providers and people experiencing homelessness throughout Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Mike Huffman, Executive Director

