

Good morning everyone. I first want to thank this committee for having me attend this oversight hearing today. My hope is that by giving my statement, others will feel empowered to use their voices and speak their truth.

My name is Rachel Lien and I am a woman in long-term recovery. I am a mother, a daughter, a friend, a sibling, a leader in recovery, and have done a lot to change the life I once lived completely around. Most importantly, I am a human being.

I came in contact with Brilliant Minds when I was graduating from treatment. I had already found housing, signed a lease, and needed help with moving, obtaining household items, and getting an electric bill taken care of. All things that I thought an HSS provider was supposed to help me with. I texted the number and was immediately met with a response from someone that said they could help me. The fact that someone was so eager to help me seemed authentic because that is the heart I have for helping others too. Unfortunately, trusting this organization was a mistake. I never met with anyone from this organization, never spoke to anyone on the phone, only text messages. When I questioned the organization about why they weren't helping they showed up at my door step with a vacuum cleaner, and I never heard from them again.

In July of 2024 I began working as a Recovery Navigator at the Minnesota Recovery Connection. During this time I began to encounter many participants with similar stories when it came to HSS. Most had signed up when leaving treatment in hopes of finding permanent housing, and had essentially been "ghosted" by the organizations. This motivated me to get ahold of my insurance claims through Ucare to see what I had been billed for.

I went through those records and found that not only had Brilliant Minds billed me for over \$2000, but that another company named [REDACTED] was billing me for the entire 10 months that I was in treatment. This amounted to over \$14,000. Seeing this with my own eyes, was both shocking and beyond angering. I know what I went through to obtain housing on my own, and it was no easy task. So to find out that there was an organization pretending to help me, and getting paid was deplorable.

Once finding out this information, I contacted my insurance company and DHS. I left a voicemail on the fraud line, and received a phone call back from DHS on November 20, 2024. DHS asked me a few questions and let me know that if they needed any additional information that a Senior investigator would call me back. I never heard back from them until after Kare 11 ran my story on May 1.

I want all of you today to know that I am one of the lucky ones when it comes to the victimization and the predatory behavior of Housing Stabilization Services. I am someone who is able to access the appropriate resources in order to catch and confirm that there was something very wrong. That is EXACTLY what I did. What about the thousands upon thousands of other Minnesotans who may not have this access? This is precisely how HSS providers have preyed

upon people for years now. I promise you, there were no limits when it came to who they were preying on. It could have been someone like me, your neighbor, or any of the community members you see outside without homes to this day.

Even as someone who accessed the proper resources, compiled all of the evidence of fraud through my medical insurance, and sent it to DHS...it still was not enough to get listened to. My question to DHS is this: by your standards and policies, what is a credible allegation of fraud? Why was I not someone who was credible enough to be listened to the first time even with all of the evidence I had provided? This is not the first time in a fraud case that DHS has done something like this. I implore you all today, to please think about that.

When this all first came to light for me as a victim of this program, I was angry for myself and how I had gotten taken advantage of. Like I said before, I am one of the lucky ones. I have a home, I have a place to eat meals, I have a job, I have the things I need to live my daily life. There are people who are not as lucky as me when it comes to stuff like this. That is why now I am more angry for those still suffering the repercussions that they didn't ask for once they decided to trust an HSS provider. With this anger, comes real motivation to make a change and be a voice for those who don't have it. That is why I said yes to coming and speaking in front of all of you today. My hope is that by doing this, others will tell their stories and real change will be made so something like this NEVER happens again.

