



Legal Services Advocacy Project

February 24, 2024

The Honorable Michael Howard
Chair, Housing Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
473 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Brian Johnson
Republican Lead, Housing Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
243 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 3961 – Tenant Remedies Related to New Construction Delays

Dear Chair Howard, Lead Johnson and Members of the Housing Finance and Policy Committee:

Legal Aid writes in support of HF 3961, which would provide important remedies to tenants when they are prevented from moving into a unit when promised in a lease due to new construction delays. Legal Aid provides civil legal services to low-income Minnesotans, Minnesotans with disabilities, and elder Minnesotans, statewide, to help them meet their basic needs. Legal Aid's Legal Services Advocacy Project provides legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of our clients and all low-income Minnesotans. Housing matters are one of Legal Aid's central areas of focus

The need for this bill was precipitated when students, who had signed leases to rent units in a new building (Identity Dinkytown) that was promised to be ready for occupancy upon their arrival for the school year, shockingly found that the building was still under construction and not legally ready for occupancy. Though the owner knew the building would not be ready in time, no advance notice was provided to the students, some of whom were coming to the University of Minnesota from other states. Under current law, the students had no legal option to break the lease and instead were forced to accept alternative terms offered by the building owner. Enactment of this bill would remedy that outrageous situation and provide students with the option to break the lease or accept a variety of alternatives from the building owner.

Thank you for allowing Legal Aid to share its views and offer its support for passage of HF 3961.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Elwood".

Ron Elwood
Supervising Attorney

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