



April 8, 2025

Dear Chair Bliss and Chair Xiong and Members of the Veterans and Military Affairs Division Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's comments on HF2444 – the Veterans and Military Affairs Division omnibus budget bill. LSS is a provider of essential services across all 87 counties with more than 2,500 employees who serve one in 63 Minnesotans every year. This includes LSS Meals which provides meal options through congregate dining, home delivered meals, frozen shipped meals and contracted meals with daycares and youth programs. In 2024, we served over 1.5 million meals to adults and youth in need. These meals help individuals and families stay healthy and live independently.

Thank you for the inclusion of additional funding for the CORE program in Article 1, Section 3 with the purpose of addressing food insecurity in Greater Minnesota through the existing CORE program. LSS has been the grantee of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs' CORE program since its establishment in 2008; however, serving nutritious meals to veterans across the state just began in April 2024. Since then, LSS Meals has provided 5,811 meals to 259 families, reaching 334 individuals in 23 cities, and we continue to experience high interest in this option. This additional funding would sustain year-round meal support for veterans and their families, increasing the number of meals and individuals served beyond our current levels.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity. Please contact me at erin.sutton@lssmn.org if we may provide further information.

Sincerely,

Erin Sutton
Senior Director of Advocacy
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota