

March 25, 2022



**RE: Support reforms to Housing Support income calculations (HF3568)**

Dear Chair Schultz and Members of the Human Services Finance & Policy Committee,

Housing Support is one of the state's most essential tools in moving people experiencing homelessness, especially unsheltered, to housing with services. As a disability program, it allows providers to meet the needs of people facing substance abuse and long-term mental health issues in project-based or scattered-site housing in the private rental market.

As Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, we operate over 600 homes, many of them supportive housing for people transitioning out of homelessness, and utilize this vital tool. We currently have in development over 400 housing support units in our project-based settings.

Unfortunately, the Housing Support program does not treat people fairly if they receive SSI. The program has a unique calculation for the SSI client obligation which is much higher than that applied to other Housing Support residents with different income sources. Often, SSI residents lose 90% of their income to the Housing Support client obligation.

This unfair treatment of SSI participants forces them to make the impossible choice between paying their client obligation or meeting their other basic needs. In effect, the current policy traps them in extreme poverty, instead of helping them gain greater housing and economic independence. As a result, many of the Minnesotans who could most benefit from Housing Support refuse it, putting an additional strain on our emergency shelter programs.

It is widely recognized that no individual or family should pay over 30% of their income towards housing. Reforming housing support for SSI recipients to this common standard will directly improve our residents' lives and create pathways for housing stability for more Minnesotans.

**Please support HF 3568 (Her) / SF3417 (Utke) to reform Housing Support income calculations to allow those with SSI benefits to retain more of their income.**

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Helvick Anderson".

Ben Helvick Anderson  
Vice President of Policy and Organizing  
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative