



January 27, 2023
Chair Wiklund
Members of the Health & Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express support for SF388. I am the Homeless Services Manager at Alluma, Inc., which is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic which provides behavioral health, substance use and homeless services to 6 rural counties (Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Polk & Red Lake Counties) in the northwest corner of Minnesota. Our homeless services are geared towards mentally ill individuals who are currently homeless, doubled up (i.e., sleeping on someone's couch, etc.) or at risk of homelessness. We have seen unprecedented referrals of individuals in need of our services in the past year. In 2022 we had 351 individuals and families referred to us, compared to only 217 in 2021. My understanding from my counterparts and area Community Action Partnership Agencies, that they also are seeing unprecedented numbers of individuals in need of assistance. This package of funding is very much so needed since shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. While we support everything included in the package, we especially want to note that the following items especially are a need.

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

While even more funding could be used, I am happy that \$150 million in funding for this is being included in SF388. Unfortunately, according to the Homelessness Management Information System, 80 of our 87 counties have either no shelter beds or lack enough shelter beds to meet the need. MCH completed a statewide survey to gauge the needed state resources to build, acquire, or renovate shelters to meet the need. Every region in the state needs access to additional shelter spaces including our rural corner of the state, and this statewide funding source would provide opportunities for shelters to generate new models to meet the need such as those that are culturally responsive, gender affirming, accessible, and are low barrier; shelter is the first step to finding permanent housing for families, individuals, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

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

This funding will allow organizations and local communities to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services. This increase will be key to supporting both new and existing shelters in providing services to people experiencing homelessness.

\$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)

This funding is vital for many individuals and families leaving shelter. THP helps individuals and families obtain stable housing where they can develop good rental history while finding a permanent housing destination.

In addition to the above priorities, I support the remaining items included in SF388:

- **Homeless Management Information System**
- **Homeless Youth Act**
- **Homeless youth; chosen family grants**

Thank you for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Gudvangen M.A., L.P." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Denise Gudvangen, M.A., L.P.
Homeless Services Manager
Alluma, Inc.