



January 30, 2023

To: Senate Health & Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee,

I am writing today to express my support for SF388. Dakota Woodlands has been sheltering families experiencing homelessness in Dakota County for over 40 years. We know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness, and we are grateful for this bill and what it will mean for the families we serve. We want to lift up two of the items listed in the legislation but we fully support everything included.

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

While Dakota Woodlands is advocating for \$200 million in funding for emergency shelter facilities, we are very pleased with \$150 million being included in SF388. As a shelter facility, families are counting on us to provide a healthy, safe space for them during their stay. As with many buildings that house a churning population, there are always capital projects to be done. However, this funding isn't always easy to come by, especially for smaller organizations. This funding is key for organizations like Dakota Woodlands to carry out needed capital projects to upgrade and improve our shelter.

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

We are thrilled that SF388 includes the full request for ESP funding. This funding will allow organizations, like Dakota Woodlands, to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services. This increase will allow Dakota Woodlands to meet the needs of the increasing number of homeless families in our community.

In addition to the above priorities, Dakota Woodlands supports the remaining items included in SF388:

- \$25 million in 2024/25 and \$40 million in 2026/27 for Homeless Youth Act grants
- \$9 million for Transitional Housing Programs
- \$2 million for Homeless Youth Chosen Family grants
- \$1.25 million for Homeless Management Information System

We applaud the leadership for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jennifer Harrison'.

Jennifer Harrison, MA, CFRE
Executive Director, Dakota Woodlands