



January 30, 2023  
Chair Wiklund  
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee

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

Haven Housing is writing to express support for the Pathway Home Act SF388. Haven Housing provides women, non-binary people, and the families they lead with shelter and housing and the opportunity to explore options for their future during periods of crisis or transition, while advocating for systems change. While we support the entire bill, I want to highlight our top three priorities.

**\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities**

While Haven Housing joins the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (MCH) in advocating for \$200 million in funding, we are grateful that \$150 million is included in SF388. Haven Housing operates one of only two family shelters in Hennepin County. We do not have enough space between our two locations to serve each unsheltered family. Last year, Haven Housing renovated our St. Anne's Place property to preserve it as a shelter. While we operated from a temporary location during this project, we nearly doubled our capacity after seeing a more than 200% increase in the number of unhoused families in Hennepin County. Our renovated facility serves up to 16 families per night, but the need hasn't gone away.

MCH completed a statewide survey to gauge the resources needed to build, acquire, or renovate shelters to meet the need. They identified nearly \$200 million in capital needs statewide to create or preserve over 3,400 shelter spaces. Shelter guests witness how much of an impact capital funding like this has on their families. One mom in our program expressed gratitude for the safe haven, saying, "it feels more like home." While I am humbled that Haven Housing can create an environment that feels safe enough and nurturing enough to call home, I never want this mom or her children to have to think of an emergency shelter as home again. This statewide funding source would allow shelters to generate culturally responsive, gender-affirming, accessible, and low-barrier shelters so that families don't repeat episodes of homelessness.

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

ESP funding is also critical to increasing the likelihood of homelessness being a one-time occurrence for a family. We are excited that SF388 includes MCH's total request for ESP. ESP funding has been instrumental in helping Haven Housing maintain safe shelter spaces where people can heal and grow.

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

We have worked with many women, non-binary people, and families who aren't ready or can't find permanent housing because of barriers like poor credit or past eviction. When someone moves from shelter to housing but isn't prepared to live independently or provided the necessary support, they too often fall back into homelessness. We are pleased that SF388 includes funding for THP, which is an important stepping stone on the path to permanent housing and is another factor in ensuring Minnesotans' episodes of homelessness aren't repeated.

In addition to the above priorities, Haven Housing supports the remaining items included in SF388: **Homeless Management Information System, Homeless Youth Act, Homeless youth; chosen family grants.**

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

Sincerely,  
Lissa Jones-Lofgren  
Executive Director