



January 31, 2022

***Sent via Email**

The Honorable Senator Wiklund, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 388

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for hearing [SF 388](#) and to Senator Dibble for authoring the bill. Olmsted County urges your support for this legislation to provide funding for emergency shelter facilities and programming. There is significant need across Minnesota to support individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and state investment will help meet these temporary housing needs.

Olmsted County has been working with local partners – county, city, and private partners – to address unsheltered homelessness in the community. This partnership collaborated in 2019 to create the Rochester Community Warming Center to address the immediate need of individuals experiencing homelessness. The warming center facilities are available during nighttime hours, and provide adult individuals with a place to sleep, shower, do laundry, receive food, and meet with case managers.

The warming center was designed to provide a short-term solution for the area's homeless population. It has now become functionally obsolete. New investment needs to be made to provide communities with the necessary resources for a long-term solution for homelessness. Olmsted County, the City of Rochester, and other local housing partners are beginning planning efforts for a permanent warming shelter. The grant opportunities included in SF 388 would provide much needed support for local communities as they attempt to create long-term solutions for shelter. Most importantly, this bill will help communities create pathways to stable housing for our most vulnerable community members.

Thank you for your consideration to invest state funding for urgently needed emergency shelter facilities throughout the state. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Wright", is written over a diagonal line that extends from the signature down towards the contact information.

Gregory Wright, Chair
Olmsted County Board of Commissioners
gregory.wright@olmstedcounty.gov