

February 1st, 2023

Chair Wiklund  
Members of the Health & Human Services Committee

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

Violence Intervention Project (VIP) is writing to express support for SF388. VIP has been advocating ending unsheltered homelessness for a number of years and this package will make it that much closer to becoming a reality. We serve over 400-600 victims of domestic and sexual violence annually in 5 counties in NW Minnesota. We often have a full shelter, including a makeshift room in our common area with portable walls and tent covers. We often have to turn people away and refer them to homeless shelters that are hours away. If there is no safe space, victims may delay fleeing a life-threatening situation. Last year in MN alone, 24 people were fatal victims of domestic violence. Shelter bed expansion and THP funding would enable us to serve more individuals and families with safe shelter and housing support. We know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. We want to lift up three of the items listed in the legislation but we fully support everything included.

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

While VIP is advocating for \$200 million in funding, we are very pleased with \$150 million 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. A statewide survey identified nearly \$200 million in capital needs that would create or preserve over 3,400 shelter spaces. Every region in the state needs access to additional shelter spaces. This statewide funding source would provide opportunities for shelters to generate new models to meet the need for culturally responsive, gender affirming, accessible, and low barrier shelter for families, individuals, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

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

We are thrilled that SF388 includes our full request for 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)**

Along with responding to our unsheltered homelessness crisis, SF388 includes funding for THP which 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, MCH 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,  
Staci Reay - Fund Development Manager