

January 31, 2023  
Chair Wiklund  
Members of the Health & Human Services Committee

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

Youthpraise is writing to express strong support for SF388. Youthpraise is an intermediary and strategic partner whose mission is to increase equity with and for Minnesota's Indigenous, low-income, and racially diverse youth. We do this work *with* young people in three impact areas of learning and leadership, economic opportunity, and health and safety. Since launching in 2012, Youthpraise has leveraged its financial, political, and relational capital and expertise in youth development to increase funding for Minnesota youth programming and promote innovation in how our communities work with youth. We believe that addressing longstanding youth inequities requires multi-faceted work among dynamic organizations and young leaders.

To do this, we are forging bold relationships in a new network of leaders to build collective power through the Twin Cities Opportunity Youth Network. Youth experiencing homelessness are a key leadership group, as we host the Youth Action Board for Hennepin County's federal demonstration project. We are excited to learn with these leaders as they work with community to take up new ways to ensure youth homelessness is brief, rare, and non-recurring. We want to uplift the Homeless Youth Act listed in the legislation, but we fully support everything that is included in the Pathways Home Act.

Young people deserve a safe and stable place to live and support as they explore and launch into the futures they want to author for themselves. Too frequently, young people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and LGBTQIA+ are pushed out of homes of origin into even more unsafe and housing insecure situations. It is incumbent upon the state to lean in and listen and learn from young people with lived experience and truly end youth homelessness as we currently know it.

The Homeless Youth Act provides a continuum of services and opportunities for innovation that can provide young people with what they need and deserve to move from homelessness to housing stability. Please support the Pathways Home Act which includes a *\$25 million increase in 2024/2025 and \$40 million in 2026/2027!*

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible support of all people experiencing homelessness in our state—including unaccompanied youth and young families.

Sincerely,



Marcus Pope,  
President