



Senator John Marty  
3235 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 23, 2023

Subject: Ramsey County Continuum of Care (SF 2033)

Dear Senator Marty and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for your support to end homelessness in Ramsey County. We believe that homelessness is preventable, and the Ramsey County Continuum of Care bill (SF 2033) is a key part of **leading the way** in ending homelessness.

Here at Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities, we have been leading the way for over 120 years in the fight against homelessness and hunger. In 2022, we provided emergency shelter and transitional housing for 1,357 men, women and children in our community. Through almost 200,000 hot meals, we were able to welcome in those who were on the streets—creating an avenue for them to receive professional mental health counseling, case management, job-skills training, education and more. All of this interrupts the cycles of homelessness as they transition to a safe and stable place to live.

We participate in the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care (HHR CoC) single adult and family workgroups, and the sheltered and unsheltered workgroup, as we aim to collaborate with other community organizations to ensure we are working together to fill gaps and meet needs in our community. As a key member of the Heading Home Ramsey Collaborative, we play an important role in ensuring all Minnesotans have the safety they need to live healthy lives. As we continue to partner with and be a key contributor in the fight to end homelessness in Ramsey County, we believe SF 2033 is necessary to support our collective efforts.

Despite ongoing, collaborative efforts, needs continue to rise. We have been above capacity in our emergency shelter at the height of the winter. Our emergency warming space in partnership with Ramsey County was the most used of the county's warming spaces with 6,293 visitors over three months and became overcrowded when the need was the greatest. Once individuals visit the warming space, we are able to offer a hot meal and a connection to services. Not only do we continue to see increases in the unsheltered, but those coming for help need longer support for mental health and chemical dependency.

As you consider Ramsey County Continuum of Care (SF 2033) during today's session, I urge you to consider the life-saving impact this bill will have on the very constituents you serve. I believe each person is made in the image of God and therefore deserving of a safe place to call home.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela J. Stefora Axberg".

Pamela J. Stefora Axberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities