

March 22, 2023

Minnesota Senate
Health and Human Services Committee
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

My name is Abdirahman Kahin and I am the Owner of Afro Deli Grill. I am writing in support of SF 2647, which would provide ongoing funds to support the distribution of prepared meals to Minnesotans in need.

We have partnered with Second Harvest Heartland through their Kitchen Coalition program since 2021 to provide halal meals to the East African community with a focus on seniors. Every week we produce more than 3,000 meals at our restaurants. In Minneapolis, we distribute almost 500 meals each day to seniors living in Minneapolis Public Housing buildings. Many are homebound and depend on this food and the interaction they get from the delivery drivers. During Ramadan we adjust our menu and delivery timing to provide Iftar and suhurs meals seven days a week to these seniors and people with special needs. During Ramadan we also produce an additional 600 servings a day that go to Islamic Centers. It is hard work, but we are proud to support the community and grateful for the partnership of Second Harvest Heartland.

Our chefs tailor these meals to meet the cultural, religious, and dietary needs of the people we serve, knowing that too many of those facing food insecurity don't have the home, health or ability to cook for themselves with food available at their local food shelf. We are proud to help fill this gap in the emergency food landscape and know that our efforts are contributing to Minnesota's hunger fight.

Our hope is that more kitchen partners like us will get the chance to take part in this work, and ongoing state funding would make that a reality. SF 2647 would allow organizations like Second Harvest Heartland to grow operations in the communities they serve, or even expand into new towns and cities across Minnesota where the greatest disparities in food insecurity exist.

It is vital that this year's budget supports our state's emergency food system to help us end hunger in Minnesota. SF 2647 will ensure that every neighbor has a meal that's right for them.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and your support for Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity.

Sincerely,

Abdirahman Kahin
Owner
Afro Deli Grill
Minneapolis, MN