

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 Emily Torgrimson, and I'm the executive director of Eat for Equity and Eat for Equity Catering. 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 July, 2020, our team made between 700-800 meals each week to distribute in the Minneapolis community. To date, we've prepared around 80,000 meals that have been served to people facing food insecurity.

Our team of cooks tailors 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.

This is a powerful and essential program that is about addressing hunger and meeting people where they are at. We know that it takes a lot to get food on the table - from being able to afford rising food costs, to access food in your neighborhood or with transportation, the ability and time to prepare food, access to a place to prepare food. Kitchen Coalition connects kitchens with donated and purchased food, and works with community organizations to distribute that prepared food to people most in need.

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 expand operations in the communities they serve, or even begin growing into new towns and cities across Minnesota where the greatest disparities in food insecurity exist. We have been part of pilot projects across the state, including St. Cloud and Winona.

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,

Emily Torgrimson
Executive Director, Eat for Equity
Minneapolis, MN