

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 Jalilia Abdul-Brown and I'm the Founder and Executive Director of Change Starts with Community and Shiloh Cares Food Shelf. 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. We provide much appreciated groceries and prepared meals to our community in North Minneapolis. Second Harvest Heartland and Kitchen Coalition have partnered closely with us to serve the community and be responsive to changing needs. Prepared meals specifically have been helpful to seniors, those spending more time at home due to neighborhood violence, and the unhoused.

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,

Jalilia Abdul-Brown  
Found and Executive Director  
Change Starts with Community and Shiloh Cares Food Shelf  
Minneapolis, MN