



March 31, 2023

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

On behalf of the Homes for All coalition, we are writing to share both our appreciation and concerns for the housing and homelessness provisions included in SF 2995.

Homes for All represents over 270 organizations across the state that advocate for safe, accessible, stable, and affordable housing across the housing continuum. Our coalition represents the full continuum of housing, from services for people experiencing homelessness, to permanent supportive housing, to affordable rental options, to homeownership opportunities for Minnesotans.

Housing Support

On behalf of the Homes for All coalition, **we first want to thank you for including critical changes to the housing support program in Article 10 of SF 2995.** People who receive housing support are older adults and/or people with disabilities who have low incomes, and the program is intended to prevent people from experiencing homelessness. But, in its current iteration, the housing support program is perpetuating poverty and housing instability for some of its recipients. Recipients who have unearned income like SSDI, RSDI, Tribal per capita payments, and veteran benefits have to pay almost all of their wages for their housing, leaving them with only \$121 per month for household costs other than housing. We have heard stories of people who have to choose between accepting housing support and losing almost all of their income and being homeless and keeping their income. This is an unacceptable decision people on this program are forced to make.

Article 10 of SF 2995 makes critical and needed changes to this program, capping the amount of unearned income recipients pay towards their housing at 30%. SF 2995 also exempts Tribal per capita payments and stipends for people with lived experience from income calculations for housing support. Thank you for these provisions.

Article 12: Housing and Homelessness

Although we appreciate the additional funding for many programs supporting and serving people experiencing homelessness, **we write urging you to ensure all programs in SF 388, the Pathway Home Act, are included and funded at the SF 388 level in the Health and Human Services budget bill.**

First, we want to thank you for including the \$2 million Chosen Family pilot project funding in the Health and Human Services Omnibus. This matches the funding in the Pathway Home Act.

We would ask that other homelessness funding be restored to the levels in the Pathway Home Act, which are outlined below:

- *Emergency Services Program*: \$40 million in the first biennium and \$70 million in FY '26- '27
- *Homeless Youth Act*: \$25 million in the first biennium and \$40 million in FY '26- '27
- *Shelter Facility Grants*: \$150 million one time

A few other provisions in Article 12 we want to call out:

- Thank you for including additional funding for Safe Harbor Act, and we know more is needed. Safe Harbor ensures sexually exploited young people have safe housing and support.
- And, thank you for funding the Family Supportive Housing program in the omnibus bill.

Our state is facing a housing crisis, and funding for people experiencing homelessness and housing instability is desperately needed across the state. SF 2995 makes some important and critical investments to these programs and makes long overdue changes to the Housing Support program. And, we want to thank you for that work. But, we know more funding is needed to meet the growing needs across the state.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael Dahl
Public Policy Director, HOME Line
Homes for All Policy Co-Chair

Annie Shapiro
Advocacy Director, MinnCAP
Homes for All Policy Co-Chair