



**MINNESOTA
HOMEOWNERSHIP
CENTER**

To: Chair Port and Members, Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee

From: Julie Gugin, President and CEO, Minnesota Homeownership Center

Date: January 18, 2023

About: Support of Minnesota Housing Commissioner Jennifer Ho

The Minnesota Homeownership Center believes that owning a home is a foundation for family and community success. For close to 30 years, we've worked to educate potential home buyers on the complicated process of qualifying for a mortgage, affording down payment and closing costs and transitioning to sustainable homeownership. We also work to help families facing mortgage crisis retain their homes. Because homeownership is the main way that households in this country create wealth, we focus our work toward those that have traditionally been left out of ownership--households of color and lower income households. Last year, upwards of 70 percent of the households we served represented communities of color, and the median income of households served was just over \$40,000.

Homeowners in Minnesota are facing unprecedented challenges, from rising home prices and limited inventory to uncertain sustainability due to COVID 19 and its economic impact. Those of us in the homeownership industry have been working diligently to coalesce around policies, programming, and impact to ensure optimum support of Minnesotans. Commissioner Ho and her team have demonstrated a commitment to working with practitioners on a variety of critical initiatives. For example: her support of the Homeownership Opportunity Alliance ensures that systemic racial practices that produced the state's racial homeownership gap are thwarted. Recently, she and her team have worked with the Homeownership Center to coordinate the city and county COVID relief programs we administered with the agency's Home Help MN program, ensuring optimum opportunity for Minnesotans to maintain their homes.

Commissioner Ho's commitment and deep appreciation of equity, affordable housing, and the needs of lower-income Minnesotans along with her committed leadership will position us all, collectively to effect meaningful change for Minnesota. We are encouraged by her vision about Minnesota's homeownership future and the enthusiasm she is bringing during these unprecedented times.

The Minnesota Homeownership Center supports Commissioner Ho's confirmation.