

March 9, 2023.

The Honorable Lindsey Port, Chair
Senate Higher Education Committee
3212 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Port and Members of the Committee:

The Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities currently has 140 student representatives across all colleges and majors, and we serve over 30,000 undergraduates who make up our student body. As advocates for better rental practices for student tenants, we are in support of Senate File 1298.

A common experience for students at the U with their landlords is extreme pressure to renew their leases as early as 15 days after their move-in date, otherwise, they are at risk of losing their units. For first-time tenants who do not know if they want to continue living with these roommates or whether they like the unit and their landlord, being pressured to secure housing early becomes stressful. The creation of a secure period of housing where a tenant can gauge all aspects of their living situation supports students to fairly obtain housing without external pressure. This bill also asks for walkthroughs with the landlord at the start and end of the lease term. Conducting a walkthrough at the start of the lease would make sure that tenants are receiving the unit they were promised and conducting it at the end of the lease allows landlords and tenants to discuss and take action over the condition of the unit and damages caused by tenants. The bill also addresses the stress that student tenants feel when they are unable to find subletters for their unit, that they may have to leave because of emergencies like leaving the U for the summer or financial reasons. Having support from the landlord in the search would mean that the student is not being punished for an emergency happening that they have no control over.

Senate File 1298 provides support to tenants across the state of Minnesota, and many of the provisions not specifically mentioned above also work to support student tenants in ways that alleviate the financial hardships they face when in college. This bill places the necessary support and resources in place for student tenants, which is why the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities is in support of Senate File 1298.

Respectfully,

Siya Sakhardande

Siya Sakhardande, 2022-23 State Coordinator