



March 16th, 2023
Chair Port
Members of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

Chair Port and members of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee,

My name is Steven Hardy, and I am writing to describe the importance of passing Bring it Home, Minnesota this year. I was born and raised in Chicago, and when I was a young man, I got addicted to drugs. Since I was grown up, my parents didn't want me around the house. I was on my own.

I had a job working at a car wash, and I stole from my manager to support my habit. I had gotten myself into a rut, and that continued for a time. But I knew that it wasn't me. So in 2012, I decided to get out of that life. I called a friend, and he happened to be in St. Paul. I didn't know where that was at the time. But I got on a bus to Minnesota. And when I got here, I felt like a new man.

I didn't know that was just the beginning. I stayed with my friend for a couple of months, on his couch - but I was still homeless. I was still in the same predicament, but not on drugs. And that was the good thing.

After a while, I found out about a place called House of Charity. And I went down for an interview. I got my own place there, and the apartment connected me to the GRH program, which gave me some money each month to help me be stable.

I was in House of Charity for about three months. And in that process, I had a chance to think. I decided to take advantage of the opportunity. I went outside every day, walked around. I stayed clean. And eventually, I was able to get my own apartment, where I pay my own rent.

Having the extra support helped me in a lot of ways. It helped me with my stability being off drugs, and it helped me find other things to do. I actually love playing video games – and I can say that's my sobriety. Playing video games for a little while each day keeps me inside and off the streets – it keeps me planted, keeps me stable.

And of course, my fiancé Mary helps me with that, too. Mary and I have a child together from when we were in Chicago – who's now 40 years old! Once I got sober, Mary came up here. We're a good team. We both like to help, and we both have big hearts. So, we help in our community now, with resident events at our apartment building and with the food shelf.

Being where I am now – I would love for another person to feel the way I'm feeling. For them to have some basic support with their rent, to give them a chance for them to grow. For them to have other opportunities, like taking their kids to a basketball game, or going out for dinner, instead of worrying about the rent.

That's why I think it's important for us to pass Bring it Home, Minnesota – for all the people who just need a little bit of support that they can rely on. Please support and pass SF11 this year. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven Hardy

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