

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



home changes everything

Chair Port and members of the committee,

My name is Dean Rupp, and I am writing to express my support for Senate File 11. As someone who has experienced the difficulties of finding affordable housing, I know the impact this bill could have on thousands of Minnesotans like me.

I moved to Minnesota in 2010 and had difficulties finding work, which then led to difficulties finding housing. This took a physical and mental toll on me. And this, over time, resulted in long-term mental and physical disabilities.

I traveled to Anoka County, where I heard there was a stable shelter called Steppingstone. They treated me with respect and dignity. The workers helped me find a path toward independent housing. Even with my substance use and mental health issues, I could get my own apartment if I had a housing voucher – something I didn't know was possible before.

All told, everything I had in my whole life was in my backpack for almost two years. But once my application was approved, I would be able to have stable housing. Through services provided by the Housing Support program, I started to look for apartments I could afford.

The case worker mentioned Como by the Lake, which was owned by Aeon. I visited the building – and it turned out to be the perfect fit. The manager took me in. And even though I had a criminal record and bad credit, my application and finances passed the requirements.

That was over four years ago now. Today, I am the happiest I have ever been. I am friendly with everyone who lives at the building. Since I moved in, I have been voluntarily upgrading landscaping for the police station next to my Aeon apartment building. I also assist the ladies who garden, laying mulch and taking care of the plants as they need it. I have taken a more robust and preventative approach to managing my mental health. I have a therapist and a doctor who support me, and I have found ways to stay busy through my volunteer efforts.

I'm very appreciative of this place. I didn't think I was going to like it here, but now I think I'm going to die here. People seem to like me, and I like them. I try to be extra helpful to neighbors, and I like to put a smile on people's faces. I cut flowers and leave them for the older women, and I make Easter eggs for all the residents when the holiday comes around. I try to do unexpected acts of kindness.

If I had one thing to emphasize about having a housing subsidy, it is that my housing grant has allowed me to become a better person. I am no longer a burden on society, having to do illegal things to stay alive, and I'm continuing to become a productive member of my community, giving back through my volunteer work.

The basic level of support provided by Bring it Home, MN (SF11) would take away the need for others to seek negative paths to get off the streets. Because of these subsidies, other people will have the opportunity to grow and give back, like I have. I ask you to support and pass SF11 this year. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dean Rupp

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