



March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Chair Port

Members of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

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

My name is Jurline Bryant, and I am writing to express the importance of passing Senate File 11 this year. This bill is designed to help low-income individuals and families who spend more than 30% of their income on rent. It would especially help the African American community.

I grew up in Mississippi. My mama was a sharecropper. And when the landlord decided he wasn't going to farm anymore, you didn't have a home anymore. I am 75 years old. And to this day, when the landlord decides he doesn't want to own your building anymore, you don't have a home anymore.

After my husband and I divorced, I lived at a shelter. I worked as a caretaker there to pay the rent for my room. I also worked at Minneapolis Community & Technical College as a clerical worker to help with food, bus money, and those things.

Eventually, I found out that Section 8 would help me with the rent, if I applied. From the time I put my name on the list to the time I got the voucher, it was a little bit over five years.

It was a long time to wait! But my Section 8 voucher gave me the opportunity to not worry about the rent anymore. It gave me time to study.

I took classes to get a liberal arts degree, a bachelor's degree in human services, and I am now a few classes away from a master's degree in children's education. I volunteered as an English and Reading tutor in Richfield, where I live.

After a couple years, I found out Aeon had bought Seasons Park Apartments in Richfield, and I called to see if I could get in. And I qualified. I've lived here now for almost six years. And I finally feel like I'm at home. At my age, knowing I'm not going to have to move again – it's a safe haven. It's peace of mind.

You need to know you're not going to have to worry about the rent. You need to know that just cause you're poor, you still matter. Having a housing voucher means that I can give back to my community. It means that I can get an education. It means that I can grow. And there are thousands of other Minnesotans who could have that same opportunity, too. I ask you to support and pass Senate File 11 this year. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Jurline Bryant