



Legal Services Advocacy Project

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Lindsey Port
Chair, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee
Minnesota Senate
3213 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Brian Johnson
Ranking Minority Member, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee
Minnesota Senate
2413 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 3979 – Tenants’ Right to Contact Police or Emergency Services

Dear Chair Port, Ranking Minority Member Lucero and Members of the Committee:

Legal Aid writes in support HF 3979. Legal provides civil legal services to low-income Minnesotans, Minnesotans with disabilities, and elder Minnesotans, statewide, to help them meet their basic needs. Legal Aid’s Legal Services Advocacy Project provides legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of our clients and all low-income Minnesotans.

Minnesota law provides an unequivocal right of a tenant to call for police help or emergency assistance in situation involving domestic violence “and any other conduct,” and prohibits the imposition of any penalties if a tenant exercises that right. Minn. Stat. § 504B.205. Unfortunately, even though we believe the law should be interpreted to include calls made by persons experiencing mental health crises, sadly, recent incidents have created the need for this bill to clarify that the law indeed does cover persons experiencing such crises.

This bill simply clarifies existing law. Given these incidents that have caused unnecessary pain for persons experiencing a mental health crisis who were merely exercising their legal rights, Legal Aid urges the committee’s strong support of HF 3979.

Thank you for allowing Legal Aid to share its views in support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Ron Elwood
Supervising Attorney

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