



March 6th, 2024

To: Chair Port & Members of the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee
Re: **Support for SF4601**

Dear Chair Port, Vice Chair Boldon, and Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee Members,

Ain Dah Yung (Our Home) Center is in full support of SF4601 which states that a municipality shall not enact, amend, or enforce a zoning ordinance that prohibits emergency shelters, except in areas zoned as residential or agricultural.

The Ain Dah Yung Emergency Shelter provides culturally specific emergency shelter to American Indian youth who are homeless, runaway, in a family crisis, or involved with juvenile corrections. Our organization provides a healing place within the community for American Indian youth and families to thrive in safety and wholeness. We are conveniently located on the corner of Lexington Parkway and Portland Avenue in a relatively affluent neighborhood right around the corner from the Governor's Mansion without issue or concern of our neighbors. By passing SF4601, shelters across the state will be able to move forward in the zoning and planning process with their current or future plans. It would be unfortunate and harmful for many people experiencing homelessness if a region had the plans and funding in place to create a shelter system but was not allowed to move forward due to restrictive zoning regulations.

MCH considers SF4601 to be a continuation of ending unsheltered homelessness. Every region in the state needs access to additional shelter spaces, and this legislation will help provide opportunities for shelters to generate new models to meet the needs such as those that are culturally responsive, gender affirming, accessible, and are low barrier; shelter is the first step to finding permanent housing for families, individuals, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

To show the need for more shelter spaces, the MN Department of Human Services- Office of Economic Opportunity received \$360M in requests for shelter capital compared to the \$100M available. It is extremely difficult for shelters to have the capacity to develop new or enhanced shelter spaces. This includes "NIMBYism" (Not in My Backyard) and SF4601 is one way to combat this.

We celebrate the forward thinking of SF4601. Up until 2023, the legislature had only once ever invested into the capital needs for emergency shelter.

Miigwech, Pidamayaye, Pinigigi (thank you)

Sheri Riemers, Executive Director