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March 5th, 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,

The Link is writing in strong 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 Link is a youth and adult led nonprofit providing a continuum of supportive services, emergency shelter and housing programs for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, sexual exploitation and/or involvement in the juvenile justice or foster care systems. Although the needs is critical for additional emergency shelter for people of all ages-it is extremely difficult to expand or open due to zoning ordinances. The Link has been and is so grateful to have been able to receive funding through the state and other sources to expand our emergency shelters and housing programs, however, we are currently in the process of trying to find sites in Dakota and Hennepin Counties that are zoned for emergency shelter and it is extremely difficult. By passing SF4601, The Link along with many other shelter providers across the state would be able to open and expand the much needed emergency shelters and help people out of homelessness.

The Link is not alone – every part of our 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 stable housing for youth, adults, families, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

Thank you so much for your work on SF4601 and your investment in emergency shelter capital during the last legislative session! SF4601 would remove a very difficult barrier to opening emergency shelters across our state!

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at bholger@thelinkmn.org or phone 612-636-4260.

Thank you so much for your consideration and support!

Sincerely,



Beth Holger, CEO

