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4/9/2024

To: Chair Port and members of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

From: Greg Owen, Board Chair, Agate Housing and Services

Chair Port and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of **Agate Housing and Services** to express our strong support for SF 4592/HF 4645, appropriating funding for the Minnesota Homeless Study. The study has been a critical resource in understanding and addressing homelessness in Minnesota since 1991. It is unique in the United States in its partnership with tribal communities, as well as the comprehensive nature of the publicly available data collected over more than 30 years. The study is used to prioritize needs, identify systemic issues, and improve programs and policies to address homelessness in our state. An investment into this study represents incredible value, as the information is used to leverage and prioritize multiple other policies for Minnesotans impacted by homelessness and ensure that investments made are impactful long-term.

Prior to joining the Agate board, I directed the Minnesota Homeless Study for Wilder Research beginning in 1991 until 2012. In fact, it was Minnesota Housing Commissioner Jim Solem who originally asked Wilder to conduct the study on a statewide basis. As the study director, it became clear to me how many of the service providers in Minnesota relied on data from the study to support their fundraising efforts. In fact, the study is now an essential tool for bringing charitable dollars to many of the more than 300 service organizations serving unhoused people throughout our state. Now, in my role as board chair for Agate, I see how much our development staff and leadership rely on the study to carry out their planning and fundraising efforts.

The Minnesota Homeless Study and the companion Reservation Homeless Study are resources for anyone working to address homelessness and housing instability across the state. This includes state, county, and city officials, as well as the non-profit homeless service providers who are on the front lines supporting those individuals and communities most impacted by homelessness. The study also supports other non-housing related service organizations that homeless individuals and families access for other needs such as healthcare, transportation, and schools. Agate Housing and Services calls on the committee to pass SF 4592/HF 4645 to ensure that the state continues to benefit from the insights provided by Minnesota Homeless Study data.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Owen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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agatemn.org



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Board Chair
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Ps. Feel free to call me with any questions about the Minnesota Homeless Study or its funding history.