



March 6, 2024

The Honorable John Hoffman
Chair, 2111 Minnesota Senate Building Human Services Committee
2111 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Jim Abeler
Republican Lead, Minnesota Senate Human Services Committee
2111 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF 4044 – HUD Housing Regulation

Dear Chair Hoffman, Lead Abler, and Members of Human Services Committee:

Elder Voice Advocates (EVA) works to ensure quality care and protect the rights of elders and people with disabilities. We have encountered issues with unregulated HUD and low-income housing facilities for the elderly and strongly advocate for your support of HF 4220. Many of these housing providers are offering unsafe living conditions, jeopardizing the safety of vulnerable adults.

A recent example was the Red Pine Estates, a subsidized housing facility in Bemidji, which had an emergency evacuation of this building in July of 2023. Volunteers struggled to find adequate shelter for nearly 50 elderly and disabled residents. Local building inspections failed to identify serious structural issues, which lead to the emergency evacuation. This situation could have been prevented with adequate regulatory oversight.

This bill proposes that HUD and low-income housing be regulated under the 2019 assisted living licensure giving these elderly and disabled people the same rights and protections as those living in identical situations. While most residents of Red Pine Estates receive services comparable to assisted living, they currently do not have the necessary protections and accountability.

The proposed legislation narrows exemptions from assisted living licensure based on HUD status, such as in the case of Red Pine Estates, and stipulates that exempt settings must comply with key provisions, including planned closures, relocation services, and retaliation provisions. It allows certain facilities to operate under assisted living licenses while still exempting some HUD settings.

This would allow:

- More vulnerable adults to receive the protections of assisted living licensure, including discharge protections.
- Allows for coordinated moves even if a person resides in an exempt setting.
- Includes exempt various protective requirements for vulnerable adults including:
 - Retaliation provisions

- Contract requirements
- Assisted Living Bill of Rights

Overall, regulating HUD housing as assisted living will help protect residents, standardize services, promote accountability, and enhance the quality of care provided to vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kristine Sundberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the last letter.

Kristine Sundberg, Executive Director

Elder Voice Advocates