

March 11, 2025

Chair Melissa Wiklund
Senate Health & Human Services Committee
2017 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support of SF 2124 (Mohamed) homelessness funding bill

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Health & Human Services Committee:

I write today in support of the Bridge to Shelter bill, SF 2124 (Mohamed) which dedicates additional state funding to critical homelessness work here in Minnesota building off the important Pathway Home legislation from 2023.

In addition to the provider needs that are bolstered in this bill, the state's investment in county work and collaborations is critical for the service delivery we do at the county and with Heading Home Ramsey-the federally mandated continuum of care. The county innovation fund in this bill acknowledges counties' fiscal cliffs caused by the end of the federal pandemic relief funding by providing a dedicated funding stream specifically for counties to provide homelessness response services with corresponding requirements with accountability for measurable results.

Emergency shelters in Ramsey County serve statewide, regional needs and must transition away from the county's property tax levy moving forward. While the population of Ramsey County accounts for 9.5% of the statewide population, we have 24% of all emergency shelter beds in the state. Only one-third of all emergency shelter entries have a last known residence in Ramsey County. This bill is the next step to aid our state in addressing this important work. Thank you for your leadership and support in consideration of SF 2124 as you build your omnibus budget bill in the weeks ahead

Sincerely,



Commissioner Rafael Ortega
Board Chair
Ramsey County Commissioner, District 5