



Legal Services Advocacy Project

January 29, 2025

The Honorable Eric Lucero
Chair
Housing & Homelessness Prevention Comm.
Minnesota Senate
2413 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Lindsey Port
Chair
Housing & Homelessness Prevention Comm.
Minnesota Senate
3213 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF 559

Dear Chairs Lucero and Port and the Members of the Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) applauds you and the co-authors for introducing SF 559, which prohibits the charging of fees for homeowners to remove restrictive covenants related to a protected class. LSAP provides policy, legislative, and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid statewide. Legal Aid's clients include Minnesotans who have low incomes, have disabilities, or are elders.

For real property in Minnesota, restrictive covenants involving religious affiliations have been illegal since 1919 -- and those involving race since 1953. Those restrictive covenants that remain in deeds and conveyance documents, even if unenforceable, constitute a stain on the property and a disgraceful remnant of overt discriminatory practices. SF 559 makes an important statement that racial discrimination in housing or discrimination in housing against any member of a protected class is not tolerated by the members of the Minnesota Legislature and the State of Minnesota.

LSAP hopes this bill will proceed to passage and make it that much easier to purge discriminatory language from public land records.

Sincerely,

Ron Elwood
Supervising Attorney