

MINNESOTA
HOMEOWNERSHIP
CENTER

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Lindsey Port
MN Senate, Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee

Re: Support for Senate File Number 1750

Dear Chair Port and Honorable Members of the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee,

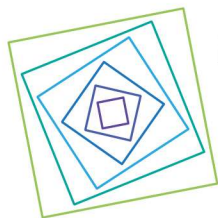
My name is Roxanne Young Kimball and I am the President of the Minnesota Homeownership Center. We're a nonprofit intermediary that provides training, advocacy, and technology support to a network of 30 non-profit organizations and over 100 housing counselors across the state, so that Minnesota residents can access and sustain homeownership.

I served on the legislative working group about HOAs and believe HOAs/CICs that function well are critical to our housing ecosystem. When HOAs function well, they can provide amenities, increased community connection, and reduced maintenance burden for homeowners.

But not all HOAs in Minnesota are functioning well. In the House testimony on the companion to this bill, a study by the Foundation for Community Association Research was repeatedly cited, which showed an 86% satisfaction rating with homeowner associations. I urge you as legislators to not put undue weight on this national-level survey, which includes many states with much stronger HOA protections than we have here in Minnesota.

Here are some of the key findings from the legislative working group that stood out to me:

- **Transparency in operations:** the working group heard frustrating, compelling stories from homeowners about simple questions around operations or amounts owed being forwarded to attorneys for response and then receiving hefty legal bills along with the answers. Jolene Johnson from Heritage Park and Sheila Hawthorne, one of the housing counselors in our network, are testifying today with their stories. I encourage additionally reviewing the legislative working group testimony of Adam Guenther, Laura Currell, Laura Nichols, Jason Stommes, Becky Cole, and Todd and Jennifer DeJournett.
- **Fines and fee caps:** The caps proposed in this bill are well researched and consistent with protections in other states, see the Legal Aid Research Brief included in the January



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10, 2025 meeting of the legislative working group for additional information. Several states, including Nevada, Virginia, and North Carolina, representing 26,500 HOAs, have caps on fines of no more than \$100 that are consistent with the \$100 cap that is proposed in this bill. Several states, including Maryland, Georgia, Arizona, and California, representing 82,800 HOAs, have caps on late fees of no more than \$15, consistent with what is proposed in this bill.

- **Education:** often education of homeowners is framed as the issue with HOA operations. In order for a homeowner education curriculum to be successful, there has to be common language and understanding about roles, responsibilities, and expectations. This bill provides that common language. Our organization is currently fundraising to build out a homebuyer curriculum specific to HOAs in support of this work that will accompany our existing statewide HomeStretch curriculum about navigating the home purchase process.

The reforms in SF 1750 are well researched, common sense reforms that are currently in place in many other states. I thank Senator Lucero and Senator Pha for their leadership in the legislative working group and stewardship of this important legislation. Minnesota, with one of the strongest homeownership rates in the country, has fallen behind on protecting HOA residents. Let's change our story and become a national leader that spells out basic protections and rights, to ease the administration of HOAs for all.

Thank you for your consideration,

Roxanne Young Kimball

Roxanne Young Kimball
President and CEO