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

I am writing on behalf of Life House to express our strong support for SF 2214/HF 2276, appropriating funding for the Minnesota Homeless Study (MHS). 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.

Life House has been working with unhoused and under-resourced youth since 1991. Currently we serve 800+ youth per year across four programs: the Drop-in Youth Center, Housing, Mental Health & Wellness, and Futures Education & Employment. Over decades, Life House has utilized the MHS to assess community needs to shape programmatic and organizational goals which have addressed youth housing needs in our community. Currently, Life House case manages 50 units of housing. Life House has also utilized the data as a comparison to our internal data, strengthening strategic direction and funding cases for support. If the study ended it would be detrimental to our organization because we leverage the data to look for and address trends. One helpful component the MHS provides is a breakdown of data for youth across various regions of the state as well as marginalized communities of youth such as youth of color and LGBTQ youth.

The Minnesota Homeless Study and the companion Reservation Homeless Study are invaluable resources for anyone working to address homelessness and housing instability across the state. This includes state, county, and city officials, homeless service providers who are on the front lines supporting those individuals and communities most impacted by homelessness, and organizations that homeless individuals and families access for non-housing related services, such as healthcare, transportation services, and schools. Life House calls on the committee to pass SF 2214/HF 2276 to ensure that the state continues to benefit from the insights provided by Minnesota Homeless Study data.

Sincerely,

Amber Sadowski
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Here today. Here tomorrow.