



Metro Transit Police Department

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LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS STUDY

3/6/25

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

From: **Metro Transit Police Homeless Action Team (HAT)**

Chair Port and Committee Members:

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

As a Sergeant with the Metro Transit Police Department I lead the Homeless Action Team, which has been in existence since 2018 and has helped hundreds of Minnesotans find housing. Our team rides our public transportation routes, respectfully connecting with riders who are using trains and buses for warmth and safety. While they might be reluctant to trust one of my officers, they often will feel more comfortable with our outreach partners from non-profits that heavily rely on funding from grants. The data that the Homeless Study provides is highly necessary to support applications for such grants.

The Homeless Study is also important because we use the data to back our financial requests for supplies and for contracting services/partners, which we do every year. This data is more important than ever for us, and many other organizations, in a time when homelessness is increasing, and service providers are struggling to keep up.

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. The Homeless Action Team, 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,

Sgt. Beverly Rodriguez, MTPD Homeless Action Team