



May 11, 2021

Dear Conference Committee Members on SF 970/HF 1030,

We urge you to support Source of Income Protections/Prohibition of Rental Assistance

Discrimination in the final omnibus bill. The provisions in the House bill would clarify that housing discrimination based on a person's source of income is illegal and provides resources for appropriate enforcement; we also urge that enforcement needs be fully and sustainably funded.

Homes for All is a coalition of 270+ organizations that reaches every corner of the state and represents non-profits, direct service providers, faith communities, the private sector, local municipalities, and philanthropic organizations - all working in unison to amplify the housing needs at the Capitol of households statewide. Source of income protections for housing assistance is one of Homes for All's top tier policy priorities for 2021. This provision protects rights and advances equity for Minnesotans, helping to ensure equitable access to safe, affordable, and accessible homes and shelter.

Source of income protections is a critical race equity issue. In Minnesota, 44% of the heads of households with voucher assistance identified as Black/African American, according to data for Minnesota HUD voucher-funded programs from October 2019 through January 2021. For vouchers administered by the Metro HRA, covering Anoka, Carver, and suburban Hennepin and Ramsey counties, the percent of voucher holders who identify as Black or African American is even higher, at 65%. Failure to amend the Minnesota Human Rights Act, by clarifying that housing assistance programs are covered by source of income protections, will continue to **worsen** harm to Minnesotans who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Rental assistance, including Housing Choice Vouchers, are crucial forms of assistance for vulnerable households. Studies have shown that source of income protections decrease discrimination against individuals and families using a voucher. Research also suggests that families with federal vouchers, many of whom have waited years for assistance they have long been eligible for, have greater success placing their vouchers and moving out of homelessness in jurisdictions with source of income laws. With a long-needed increase in vouchers recently authorized by the American Rescue Plan, ensuring these vouchers can be fully put to use in supporting housing stability for families and individuals is critical.

We know that where we live impacts everything. Home is where children learn, workers earn and how communities thrive. The Homes for All coalition is available to regularly engage in conversations about an effective path forward to ensure stability for all. For any additional information to help inform your policy decisions. Please reach out to the policy co-chairs, Michael Dahl (651-336-5902), Kari Johnson (612-387-6398), or Zack Eichten (651-829-0888) should you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Pastor Sue Koesterman & Chad Adams
Homes for All Co-Chairs