



home changes everything

April 4, 2023
Chair Gomez
Members of the House Tax Committee

Chair Gomez and members of the House Tax Committee,

My name is Jurline Bryant, and I am writing to express the importance of passing House File 2335 this year. In particular, I want to express my support for the metro sales tax to create a state-based housing voucher system.

I grew up in Mississippi. My mama was a sharecropper. And when the landlord decided he wasn't going to farm anymore, you didn't have a home anymore. I am 75 years old. And to this day, when the landlord decides he doesn't want to own your building anymore, you don't have a home anymore.

After my husband and I divorced, I lived at a shelter. I worked as a caretaker there to pay the rent for my room. I also worked at Minneapolis Community & Technical College as a clerical worker to help with food, bus money, and those things.

Eventually, I found out that Section 8 would help me with the rent, if I applied. From the time I put my name on the list to the time I got the voucher, it was a little bit over five years.

It was a long time to wait! But my Section 8 voucher gave me the opportunity to not worry about the rent anymore. It gave me time to study.

I took classes to get a liberal arts degree, a bachelor's degree in human services, and I am now a few classes away from a master's degree in children's education. I volunteered as an English and Reading tutor in Richfield, where I live.

After a couple years, I found out Aeon had bought Seasons Park Apartments in Richfield, and I called to see if I could get in. And I qualified. I've lived here now for almost six years. And I finally feel like I'm at home. At my age, knowing I'm not going to have to move again – it's a safe haven. It's peace of mind.

You need to know you're not going to have to worry about the rent. You need to know that just cause you're poor, you still matter. Having a housing voucher means that I can give back to my community. It means that I can get an education. It means that I can grow.

There are thousands of other Minnesotans who could have that same opportunity, too - if you support the creation of a state-based voucher system. I ask you to support and pass House File 2335 this year. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jurline Bryant