

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Lindsey Port

City/Town: Burnsville

Legislative District: SD 55

Party: DFL

Candidate responses in italics.

1. In July 2021, a [national poll](#) found that 68% of the public believes that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the rising cost of housing and ensuring everyone can afford a place to live. **What do you believe is the role of government in ensuring everyone has a place to call home?**

Every Minnesotan deserves a place to live. Having a home is basic and essential to the stability required for one's personal success, which in turn contributes to the well-being of our state. The private sector alone cannot completely address the public's need for housing. Therefore, one role of the government is to ensure that all of our state's residents have access to housing. This can be done in various ways, such as public financing, incentives, and mandates. We must massively increase our state's investment in affordable housing. Additional measures I support include tax incentives and grants for builders to produce affordable homes and required affordable home units for planned apartments and housing developments. We need to support and encourage non-governmental organizations that focus on affordable housing. Other cities (e.g., Mankato) have reached out to their residents for input as well. Such efforts are part of responsible governance.

2. Nearly all counties in Minnesota (92%) are not able to provide sufficient shelter or temporary housing to those who are homeless. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

I am very much in support of the Housing First model, to get Minnesotans experiencing homelessness into permanent affordable housing as soon as possible and to give them access to rental assistance and support services that will allow them to keep that housing. Other measures include the establishment of a living wage and social services in the areas of dependency treatment, domestic violence, and workforce training. Tenant focused policies can also help keep people in stable homes

3. Emergency rental assistance keeps people stably housed, as we saw with federal pandemic-related funding. Historically, nonpayment of rent is the most common reason landlords evict their tenants. During times of financial crisis, families without access to financial resources may be displaced, evicted, or even become homeless. **What will you do to prevent evictions?**

I support efforts to provide housing assistance money to people at risk of eviction and also to require landlords and mortgage holders to give adequate notice of intent to evict, so that arrangements can be made to avoid eviction. I support the Homes for All bill that would create a long term rental stabilization fund in MN.

4. Minnesota's housing crisis disproportionately harms families of color, especially Black and Indigenous households. Minnesota is one of the worst states in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership. Additionally, 58 percent of Black renters are paying more than they can afford on housing costs. **What meaningful steps will you take to eliminate racial disparities in housing?**

Racial disparities in housing reflect systemic racism generally. For example, Black Minnesotans are more likely to be arrested than their white counterparts and, once arrested, more likely to be convicted. In 2016, HUD stated that turning down tenants or mortgage seekers because of a criminal conviction on their record may be a violation of the Fair Housing Act. It is de facto discrimination for a landlord or lender to have a blanket policy against all those with criminal convictions. To address systemic racism, a multi-dimensional approach is needed to get at the root problems responsible. In addition to passing protections that limit how far back landlords can go when running a background check (similar to reforms passed in Minneapolis), fully funding our public schools would help narrow the educational achievement gap. Addressing problems in economic opportunity, affordable healthcare and safety are also needed. Stronger enforcement of existing laws on financial practices (e.g., lending) would also help. There is also significant evidence that corporate landlords are buying up homes that first-time homebuyers would purchase, further limiting action we can take to change the homeownership gap in MN. We should be looking at ways to ensure people are able to buy homes in MN, not just wealthy corporations.

5. There are approximately 170,000 renter households in the state that earn less than \$31,200 per year. But rental assistance is only available to one out of every four income-qualifying households. Even though more than 100,000 lowest income households need homes, the state only supports the production of 100 homes each year for these families. **What will you do to support the housing needs of those at the lowest income level in Minnesota?**

We must move forward with both state investment in increasing our capacity to build housing for low-income residents and also creating a rent stabilization program for our state. Our investment in housing is laughably small and does not meet the needs of our communities. A completely new baseline of what

investments in housing look like must be implemented in the creation of new housing, preservation of NOAH housing, and lowering the costs via subsidies.

6. Energy efficiency improvements in multifamily buildings and weatherizing single family homes improve indoor air quality, eliminate drafts, and protect residents from extreme cold and heat—delivering health benefits and lower health care costs. **What strategies do you support to improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs?**

We have an opportunity with the federal Inflation Reduction Act to get significant federal money to Minnesota for weatherization and energy efficiency. It is vital that we provide grants to communities most affected by these rising costs and outdated buildings to reduce costs and play an important role in reducing our carbon footprint. I was able to pass my bill to extend the Cold Weather Rule an additional 30 days last session. It is a good small step, but must be coupled with working to bring down costs and increase weatherization strategies.

7. Minnesota's home values are increasing rapidly, constraining low- and middle-income families from achieving affordable homeownership, including more than 64,000 households of color. **What steps will you take to increase opportunities for renters to purchase homes, condos, or cooperative ownership models?**

For Minnesotans who choose to buy rather than rent, there are helpful programs available, such as the Start Up, Step Up, Deferred Payment Loan, Monthly Payment Loan, and Mortgage Credit Certificate programs. Federal programs, including counseling services, are also available. All these consumer aids are deserving of continued governmental support and funding. Additionally, I believe we are at a point where we need to restrict or ban corporate ownership of single family homes, as families who are ready to purchase are being pushed out by corporate ownership.

8. Including the recommendations of the community when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. **How will you include those most impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions?**

Since elected, I have held a housing roundtable with members of my own community on a quarterly basis. In my work on the Housing committee, I have built relationships with many organizations that help to guide my work on these issues. I strongly believe that listening to the organizations most closely connected with those experiences the challenges of homelessness, renting, and homeownership has helped me to become a leader in this area, and I will continue to value those relationships as I move forward in this work.

