

Subject: PRESS RELEASE: Bill for Constitutional Amendment seeks to address ongoing, statewide Minnesota housing crisis

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**Bill for Constitutional Amendment seeks to address ongoing,
statewide Minnesota housing crisis**

SAINT PAUL - This week, Representative Michael Howard and Senator Zaynab Mohamed introduced the Our Future Starts at Home bill for a constitutional amendment that would ensure long-term, sustainable, predictable, and ongoing investments to address Minnesota's housing crisis. This bill, supported by the Our Future Starts at Home (OFSAH) coalition and

over two dozen legislative authors, will help improve Minnesotans' quality of life by creating new opportunities for many families across the state to have ongoing access to safe and stable homes. We're excited that our partners and authors are coming together to create a path for guaranteed continued funding that builds on this year's historic progress and addresses Minnesota's persistent housing needs.

Too many Minnesotans are living in crisis. Minnesota has a significant housing shortage: 1 in every 4 Minnesotans can't afford a home. Over 500,000 Minnesotans across the state must choose between paying for their home and other necessities like food and medicine.

“Our lack of affordable homes, and the housing shortage in general, perpetuates racial and economic disparities and hurts families and children,” said Chris Coleman, President & CEO of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and OFSAH coalition member. “We need this amendment to help ensure we are creating and investing in homes that fit the needs of families across Minnesota.”

This unconscionable situation which has been decades in the making due to chronic underinvestment in housing, cannot be solved overnight. Addressing a statewide long-term problem requires a long-term solution, and a constitutional amendment will serve as the foundation. By transcending zip codes, race, and income, this comprehensive approach benefits every resident of Minnesota, guaranteeing access to safe and attainable housing for all.

The present moment offers a valuable chance to secure funding for housing. What truly sets this amendment apart as a positive stride is protecting housing from potential budget cuts that may arise with shifting political circumstances. It also reaches Minnesotans in every corner of the state.

Coalition member Rhonda Otteson, Executive Director of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, said, "It's time we make an ongoing commitment to ensuring every Minnesotan has a safe, secure, affordable place to call home. Funding from this amendment will reduce our state's racial and regional housing disparities and provide critical ongoing funding for solutions to address homelessness. We're excited to be part of a statewide coalition committed to housing stability for every Minnesotan and look forward to working with

legislators and community members to gain their support."

The Our Future Starts at Home Constitutional Amendment will not only raise and dedicate critical funding for affordable housing, but it will also ensure that communities have a powerful voice in where that funding goes and that we're meeting the needs on the ground. The amendment creates three councils that will guide each flexible fund to ensure that Minnesotans' perspectives are at the core of the decision-making process regarding how to best invest in our communities. Each fund's strategic plan and recommended policies and expenditures will have a mandate to: reduce disparities, support community-based solutions, improve the condition of homes, increase accessibility, decrease energy costs, and improve efficiency.

"Minnesotans want and deserve an ongoing commitment to affordable housing that meets our needs both today and in the future. Our housing shortage slows down growth and investment perpetuating inequity and injustice in every corner of the state. It's time for this amendment because it's time to change that," said Nelima Sitati Munene, Executive Director for ACER (African Career Education and Resources) and OFSAH coalition member.

Our Future Starts at Home, the coalition driving the movement for an amendment, has received support from a wide range of organizations, including housing advocates, faith-based groups, and community organizations. Advocates for the amendment encourage Minnesotans to get involved in the campaign by expressing their support for a historic movement toward housing for all.

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About Our Future Starts at Home:

Our Future Starts at Home is a coalition of over 40 housing, faith, and community groups fighting for securing sustainable, predictable, and ongoing funding—an essential part of fixing Minnesota's broken housing system. For more information, please visit www.OurHomesMN.org.

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