

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact:

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What: Homeless Day on the Hill; We will hear from people with lived experience, lawmakers, and policy experts

Where: Minnesota State Capitol -- Press Conference Room (B971)

When: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 | Program at 9:00 am | Press Conference at 11:30 pm* (locations at bottom)

800+ Advocates Turn Out for Bonding and Expanding Emergency Shelters

St. Paul, MN – On any given night, 10,000 children, families and adults are homeless. And homelessness is growing. The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless’ legislative priorities include expanding emergency shelter beds to ensure no one has to sleep outside, investing in programs that cultivate long-term stability, and guaranteeing everyone in our community has a permanent place to call home. **Of the 87 counties in MN, only seven have enough shelter beds for individuals and only fourteen have enough shelter beds for families.** The flip side of that: 80 counties lack enough shelter beds for individuals and 73 counties lack enough shelter beds for families.

“The reality of rural homelessness is families and individuals living without shelter, without even the luxury of a waiting list for emergency shelter in many communities. Rural homelessness is a family with three children spending thanksgiving and Christmas in a Wal-Mart parking lot in their minivan. Rural homelessness is a woman fleeing domestic violence without family or friends that spends the winter sleeping in an abandoned truck in a junkyard on the outskirts of town. Rural homelessness is a patient discharged from the hospital to his vehicle during the winter where the catheter he uses for his medical condition continually freezes.”

-- Rose Surma (Executive Director) from Oasis Central Minnesota; Little Falls, Minnesota

Currently, the state does not have a mechanism to fund capital requests for emergency shelters, and we desperately need shelters in communities across the state. We are relying on leadership to help make the best decision on how and where the funding should come from. **We know that a \$50M investment to expand emergency shelter beds will provide immediate and temporary housing for our most vulnerable Minnesotans.** Emergency shelter beds generate a short-term solution for individuals and families sleeping outside. They are the starting point to gaining long-term stability. Emergency housing should be adequately funded so individuals and families can move into their permanent place to call home.

Homeless Day on the Hill will convene more than **800** individuals from across the state to advocate for:

- **\$50 Million** investment to expand and preserve shelter beds
- **\$15 Million** investment to strengthen the Emergency Services Program (ESP)
- **\$500 Million** in bonds for homes

We know where we live impacts every aspect of our lives. We also know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. Let’s go big this session so we can go home.

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Please note: there will be a program at 9:00am - 10:00am at Central Presbyterian Church (500 Cedar St, St Paul, MN 55101) Lt. Governor Flanagan, DHS Commissioner Harpstead, Ain Dah Yung Center, Servants of Shelter and Senator Senjem (Chief Author SF3257) will speak. 11:30am the Press Conference will include: Rep. Hassan (Chief Author of HF3358), Simpson Housing Services, Oasis Central MN, Metropolitan Urban Indian Community, United Community Action Partnership, Street Voices of Change and Senator Utke (Chief Author SF3599).