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JRLC Legislative Priorities 2018

Bonding for Affordable Housing

Where we live impacts every aspect of our lives; the jobs we can access, the education our children receive and the well being of our senior population.

Across the state, communities suffer from a lack of affordable housing and in many areas, affordable housing is disappearing faster than it can be replaced - making a housing shortage even more severe.

The JRLC joins with Homes For All in supporting \$140 Million in Housing Bonds: \$110 for new affordable housing across our state and \$30 Million to preserve and improve existing housing. Please support this important bonding to help all Minnesotans have a safe, affordable place to call home.

Childcare for Homeless Families

The Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps over 30,000 children access nurturing, affordable child care. Unfortunately, parents experiencing homelessness may not be eligible to participate in CCAP because they are not currently employed or in school. Without childcare, these parents cannot look for work or participate in the educational programs to make them employable.

We support expedited processing of CCAP applications from families experiencing homelessness to provide parental support and stability for their children as quickly as possible. We also support allowing families experiencing homelessness to participate in CCAP for up to three months without meeting the work or education requirements. This would allow parents a genuine path for finding employment and housing while providing children stable, safe, nurturing childcare during this time of family crisis.

Reducing Fees and Fines on Minor Traffic Violations

Every traffic violation in the state of Minnesota comes with a \$75 state surcharge, in addition to a local fine. Minnesota law allows a judge to waive or reduce the local (city or county) fine if someone is indigent or if paying the fine would create undue hardship for them or their immediate family. Courts may also require community service in lieu of all or a portion of the local fine. Unfortunately, current law does not allow waiver or reduction of the state surcharge.

As a part of Minnesota Asset Building Coalition, JRLC is asking for: 1) extending judicial authority to the state surcharge, allowing waiver, reduction or community service in lieu of this surcharge; 2) eliminating automatic license revocation for failure (in many cases, inability) to pay these fines -- any unpaid tickets or citations will continue to be turned over to the Department of Revenue for collection; 3) support efforts to make eligible Minnesotans aware of the option to seek waiver or reduction of a fine.

Tax Policy Should Prioritize Working Families

Many hard-working Minnesota families struggle to make ends meet. Tight budgets make it hard to pay for housing, transportation, food, childcare and other necessities. Minnesota's tax code should continue to support Minnesotans seeking economic stability through policies including the Working Family Credit, Child Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Credit and property tax refunds for homeowners and renters.

We urge you to make these low- and moderate-income families a high priority as Minnesota makes tax policy decisions

JRLC is the largest and most inclusive interfaith public interest group in Minnesota — people of diverse faiths bringing vision and wisdom to the public realm for the well-being of Minnesotans. JRLC is authorized and governed by four Sponsoring Members: the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and the Islamic Center of Minnesota.