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**Subject:** Student Rentals

Dear Mr. Stark,

I was greatly discouraged by the new and amended legislation that was put forward recently concerning the student housing issue. As you know, many people who live in the neighborhood are opposed to this legislation and many others who own property in the area (and pay non-homestead property taxes) are opposed to it as well. It seems that a small group of "loud" citizens have co-opted the term "tipping point" and convinced fellow citizens to give up their property rights in the name of "safety and quiet". Can you think of a better place to live in Saint Paul? I cannot. The reason the neighborhood is GREAT is because of the rentals and the students. Merriam Park would look much different and have much lower property values and a much less diverse culture without the students. I have never understood the complaints from some of the citizens that support this legislation. I remember sitting at the meeting at the Merriam Park Rec Center last year and a woman spoke up and said that she felt like she lived in DETROIT? What? That was followed up by a gentleman literally screaming at a female landlord and her husband apparently unaware that she too pays property tax. Later in the evening a man got up towards the side of the room and gave a long speech about himself which was followed with his telling us about a tipping point and the scourge of students peeing in his yard. Again. And this is enough to cause legislation to be enacted? What?

Detroit, screaming, long winded urination speeches?

Ridiculous.

When are voices of reason going to be not just heard but acknowledged in this discussion? There are many people with large investments in this neighborhood dating back 30 to 50 years that completely disagree with the wild remarks made by the proponents of this legislation

I have lived in Merriam Park for over 20 years. I bought my home with the understanding and expectation that I would be able to live in it for 5 to 15 years and as I became older I would eventually rent it out. I bought it from an older woman who had raised a family there. I asked her about the surrounding homes and she said sometimes they are great and sometimes they are loud and noisy. I knew what I was getting into and so do most of the other people who live in the neighborhood. That is why they moved here. They like the vibrancy, the bikes on the sidewalks, the students cheering from 5 blocks away during a football game and sometime you even get to like the students themselves (the majority are nice

kids). There are many people who feel the same way. One day I want to be able to rent my home out to the students too. In fact I bought it based on the understanding that I would be able to do that. This legislation makes it impossible (the 150' rule) to do that. My only option is to rent the home to people who are not students. There is no doubt that eventually the homes in this neighborhood, if prohibited from allowing students, will eventually rent out to non-students. After all, that is what landlords and people trying to sell homes in bad economy do. Eventually, landlords will start to knock down cheap homes (which are getting cheaper) and start building or leaving lots vacant for a later date. In fact, that has already begun in two locations that I know of. The "concerned citizens" will have to group up again to prevent apartment buildings from being built and they will be crying for the days when the only issue was a student rental house down the block and a lonely beer can rolling through their neighbors lawn the day after homecoming.

Please think of different ways of solving this issue. The problems are not as big or as complex as certain groups would like to think. Opening the door to a process like the one outlined in the new legislation flies in the face of property rights, personal rights and individual liberties that we as citizens should be able to enjoy. If I want to keep my home after I move and rent it to a family or group of students I should be able to and if the DSI is going to have a list available to the public of which homes have students in them then what is next? A list of where teachers live, or landlords, or waitresses or barbers. Would you support legislation preventing teachers from living in certain rental properties if a group of "citizens" thought that teachers were bad for the neighborhood. No, you would not. This legislation is one step away from illegal and anyone who reads it can see that it restricts and prevents a certain group of people from having the rights of other groups of people based simply on where they live and what they do for a living. How far down this road is the city willing go? What a sad commentary on what this neighborhood has become that local citizens would group up together to prevent other law abiding citizens from living in their neighborhood. This has happened before in the United States in other ways and at other times and it should be stopped.

Mr. Stark, as a council member and a human being, you should oppose this legislation. Please do not side with a group of people who think that they should not have to live around or near another group of people based simply on what they do for a living. There are other ways to look at this issue and better ways to solve it.

Sincerely,

David Kvasnik