

# RADIAS

HEALTH

Welcome to a full circle of care.

June 15, 2020

Rebecca Noecker, Councilmember Ward 2  
15 Kellogg Blvd. West 310-B City Hall  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**Via Electronic Delivery**

**Re: Saint Paul SAFE Ordinance Under Consideration (Ord 20-14)**

Dear Councilmember Noecker,

RADIAS Health writes in support of the proposed SAFE Housing ordinance (20-14) and thanks the Mayor and council for their leadership on this critical issue.

RADIAS Health is a mental health agency, supportive housing provider, public housing authority, homeless outreach provider, and landlord. In every one of these areas, we have seen the effects of St Paul's critical shortage of both affordable housing and tenant protections.

RADIAS provides rental assistance through county, state, and federal programs to hundreds of low-income and disabled households in St Paul and across the metro. In recent years, our biggest barrier to helping more households has been finding landlords who are willing to rent to our participants. They are denied based on their rental, criminal, or credit history, and often landlords refuse to work with any subsidy program at all. The provisions on tenant screening and security deposits are targeted exactly at this barrier, and we strongly support them.

The housing shortage in St Paul has led to our rental assistance participants being "renovicted" on multiple occasions, often with little notice. We strongly support the advance notice of sale provision to allow tenants more time to find new affordable housing when theirs is sold and renovated to "upscale" housing.

St Paul is majority renters and those renters are disproportionately black, indigenous, and other persons of color, as is the population of those experiencing homelessness. As a country we are all looking more closely at the causes of the racial disparities in our laws and systems. These provisions would be a small step toward fixing our laws to stop exacerbating these disparities.

COVID-19 has made all the previously existing problems with our housing market in St Paul all the more critical. The pandemic is disproportionately affecting the same

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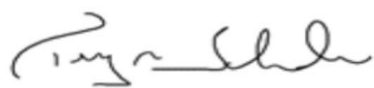
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populations most likely to be renters in St Paul. We can't tell people to stay safe and stay socially distant if they don't have a safe place to sleep at night. Passing this ordinance will help keep people housed and better able to protect themselves and loved ones from COVID-19.

This ordinance won't fix the housing market overnight, but it is a good start, and RADIAS Health strongly urges the council to pass it and continue to work on more reforms so that everyone in St Paul has a safe, affordable place to live.

Sincerely,



Terry Schneider  
CEO  
RADIAS Health

CC: Mayor Carter, Councilmember Thao, Councilmember Tolbert, Councilmember Jalali, Council President Brendmoen, Councilmember Yang, Councilmember Prince