

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

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madison

July 21, 2014

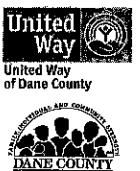
Dear Homeless Issues Committee:

I am writing to you today to oppose Heidi Wegleitner's proposed ordinance to change county shelter contracts to include a third party appeal process. At the YWCA, we work really hard with families to ensure their success in our shelter facility. In the rare occurrence that we ask someone to leave, it is after numerous attempts to work with them on the concerning behaviors. We must consider how one person's behavior may be affecting the whole community. Careful thought and consideration go into our decision to ask someone to leave shelter. Multiple staff will consult on a case to see if there are any opportunities left to help the family be successful. Once we have tried all options, we may ask someone to leave shelter. If there is an incident of physical violence we will ask someone to leave without the opportunity to change their behavior.

There are three main reasons the YWCA is opposed to this ordinance.

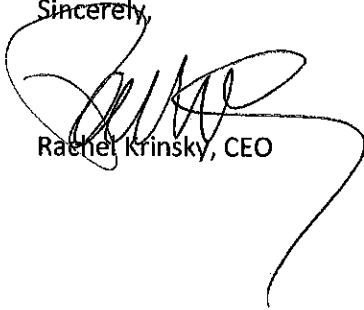
1. The YWCA is against this ordinance because we feel that we have a working appeal process in place. We have had shelter residents use our process and have the decision upheld and overturned. We feel this shows that we work hard to be fair.
2. The process laid out in the ordinance will be a burden on staff. When someone is asked to leave it means that staff has already put a lot of work into trying to help them be successful. This ordinance may result in even more staff time being put towards someone who wasn't able to change their behavior while in shelter. This time will take away from what staff can be doing to assist those who are following shelter policies.
3. We are very concerned about confidentiality in this process. The grievant is able to access all written documentation pertaining to an incident and names may only be redacted if the witness was "the victim of violent criminal activity or threatened criminal activity." Having any named witnesses given to the grievant potentially puts those people at risk for threats or acts of violence. The result could be that shelter policy violations will not be reported because witnesses do not want to be exposed.

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I urge you to carefully consider this proposed ordinance. The YWCA has an appeal process in place that works well for the way our shelter operates. If you have any questions please contact Torrie Kopp Mueller, Housing Director, at (608) 257-1436, option 2 or tkmueller@ywcamadison.org.

Sincerely,



Rachel Krinsky, CEO



Torrie Kopp Mueller, Housing Director