

March 23, 2022

Committee on State Government and Elections
St. Pau, Mn. 55155

RE: HF 4036

On behalf of the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) I am writing to ask for your support of HF 4036, a bill that requests the establishment of a task force to examine Minnesota aging demographics and the necessity of creating a Department on Aging within the executive branch.

As Minnesota's State Unit of Aging, the MBA promotes policies to the state legislature, the Governor and state agencies that accurately reflect the needs and interests of older Minnesotans.

There have been numerous research and demographic studies highlighting the shift in the number of older Minnesotans. The challenges accompanying this are significant and include workforce issues, appropriate and adequate housing, affordable healthcare, and accessible transportation to name a few.

It appears to us that the current state organizational structure and processes are not effectively meeting these challenges. We believe that a more coordinated statewide approach is necessary to address the critical changes that must be made if older Minnesotans are able to age safely in their homes.

Passage of HF 4036 is the first step in acknowledging Minnesota's continuing commitment of support and advocacy for its aging population. It demonstrates our desire to identify best practices, our willingness to optimize coordination at all levels and our belief that engaging in conversations with all stakeholders, state agencies, public and private partners and older adults and their loved ones will result in a state where every older resident feels safe, secure, valued and respected.

Sincerely,

Susan Mezzenga
Chair of MBA
Brainerd, MN