



1919 University Avenue W., Suite #500 | Saint Paul, MN 55104  
1-866-554-5381 | Fax: 651-644-5539 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598  
aarp.org/mn | aarpmn@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmn  
facebook.com/AARPMinnesota

May 4, 2021

**TO:** Senate and House Health and Human Services Omnibus Conferees:  
Senators Benson, Abeler, Utke, Koran, Hoffman;  
Representatives Liebling, Schultz, Gomez, Pinto, Shomacker

**FROM:** Mary Jo George, AARP Minnesota

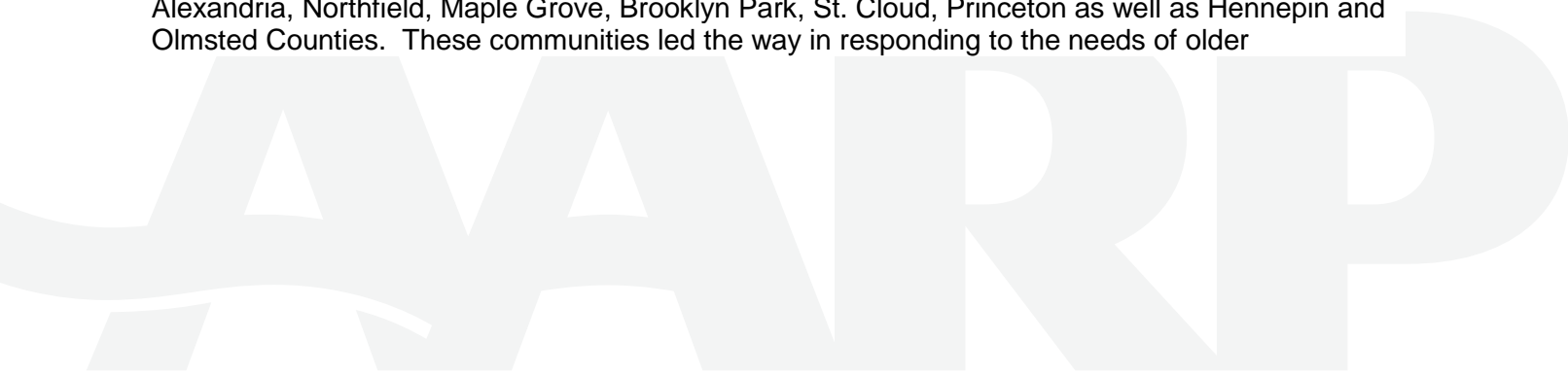
**RE:** **AARP Provision in the Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill** (HF 2128; Art.14, Sec. 41)

On behalf of our nearly 640,000 members, AARP Minnesota **strongly supports the provision authorizing the extension of the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota through October, 2022 in House Article 14.** We urge conferees to adopt this provision in order to focus our state on efforts to improve the lives of older Minnesotans and the communities they call home. This provision also has broad support from aging services providers and other advocacy organizations represented by the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging.

This extension allows the Council to continue its work until a permanent council can be established in law, and will help support the growth and momentum happening at the community level to prepare for and engage an ever-increasing number of older Minnesotans. Given the staggering impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on older Minnesotans, the Council will prioritize emergency preparedness issues for communities that have suffered a disproportionate share of deaths and hospitalizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By way of background, in 2019 Governor Walz established the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota to begin to address the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly aging state. That Council delivered a set of recommendations in 2020 focused on making this work permanent, and making Minnesota a more Age-Friendly state where residents can thrive at every age and every life stage. AARP research shows the vast majority of older Minnesotans want to remain in their community for as long as possible, but often lack the necessary supports and opportunities to do so. Therefore, Age-Friendly communities maintain a focus on older adults and use a set of domains that allow communities to plan for and focus on the things that will allow residents to age with independence, dignity and purpose.

Today, there are Age-Friendly like efforts underway in places across Minnesota – from cities and counties to universities and health systems. There are nine Age-Friendly communities officially enrolled in the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities including Minneapolis, Alexandria, Northfield, Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, St. Cloud, Princeton as well as Hennepin and Olmsted Counties. These communities led the way in responding to the needs of older



Minnesotans during the pandemic; and they and others can help us be more resilient during the next crisis.

Creating a more age-friendly Minnesota should be an imperative for all of us. We've long known the demographics. We must now do more to create a state and communities where all people can live where they choose with independence and dignity.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important provision.

