

Annette Duncan Testimony, President of the United Way of Steele County

Madam Chair and Members of the Human Services Finance Committee:

My name is Annette Duncan and I am the President of the United Way of Steele County, located in Owatonna, MN. I have been a volunteer for over 25 years. While I have a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Management and am a leader in my community, nearly all of my leadership skill development has come from my work with organized volunteer service programs.

In 2020, we were given the opportunity, through a small grant from MAVA to bring structure to volunteer efforts in Steele County. We were in the middle of a pandemic, our nonprofits were struggling to do their work as their volunteer base was primarily from at risk populations, and the need was increasing every day. They need new volunteers but did not have the capacity to recruit or manage these volunteers. With assistance from MAVA we created Volunteers United, introducing, to date, hundreds of new volunteers to the county, and thousands of hours of service. We have yet to see a decline in the need for human services in Steele County. In fact, the numbers continue to rise, especially around food insecurities, housing, and mental health.

We are tasked as United Way and nonprofits as a whole to fill the gaps in our communities and insure that every person has access to the services they need to survive and achieve a good quality of life. We cannot accomplish this without volunteers, and we can't continue to manage volunteer programs without support. This bill will allow for MAVA to support other underserved communities across the state and afford nonprofits the ability to meet the ever-increasing needs of our communities.

Your support ensures that Minnesota continues to grow service minded leaders to address our communities' greatest challenges. Thank you for your support and consideration in passing HF 1811.