



April 5, 2024

TO: Chair Klevorn and Members of the Committee on State and Local Government
FROM: City of Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA)
SUBJECT: Support for HF 4413

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the Committee on State and Local Government,

As representatives of the Advisory Committee on Aging, we are writing to express our strong support for HF 4413, which proposes to allow remote participation in board and commission meetings. We believe that this bill is essential for promoting accessibility and inclusion, particularly for older adults in our community.

Older adults often face unique challenges that can hinder their ability to participate fully in public meetings. Factors such as mobility limitations, transportation barriers, and health concerns can make attending in-person meetings difficult or even impossible for many older adults. As a result, they may be excluded from important discussions and decision-making processes that directly impact their lives and well-being.

By allowing for remote participation, HF 4413 would help overcome these barriers and ensure that older adults have equal access to participate in board and commission meetings. Remote participation enables older adults to join meetings from the comfort of their own homes, using familiar technology such as computers or telephones. This not only eliminates the need for physical transportation but also provides a more accessible and convenient option for older adults to engage in civic activities.

Moreover, remote participation can help combat social isolation among older adults, which is a significant concern, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing opportunities for older adults to connect with their communities and participate in meaningful discussions remotely, HF 4413 can contribute to their overall well-being and quality of life.

In addition, remote participation aligns with the goals of age-friendly communities, which seek to create environments that support and enable active aging for all residents. By adopting remote participation policies, Minnesota can demonstrate its commitment to fostering age-friendly communities and ensuring that older adults can continue to contribute to civic life and decision-making processes.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HF 4413 and take decisive action to promote accessibility and inclusion for older adults in our community. By allowing remote participation in board and commission meetings, we can create a more inclusive and democratic society that values the voices and contributions of all individuals, regardless of age.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Boehmer

Stephanie Boehmer
City Liaison for ACOA