

February 7, 2023

To: MN House State and Local Government Finance and Policy

Fr: Kathleen Kelso, member of Elder Voice Advocates Policy Committee

Re: Support for HF 979

Members of the MN House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee, we ask for your support of HF 979 because we are all aging. We must ask ourselves: how and where do I want to live in my community? Not aging in place, in isolation, but in my community?

The Legislative Task Force is necessary to:

- conduct a public review of aging with people across Minnesota to examine priorities that support aging in their communities,
- recommend a statewide plan of action, legislative proposals, and an entity such as an agency or office to implement those policies for aging in communities across Minnesota, and
- recommend private and public investments throughout the state to build and sustain a supported infrastructure for safe and affordable housing options, transit, health care, and local community-based resources for aging.

The Minnesota State Demographer projected Minnesota's population of persons aged 65+ will reach 1 million this year, 2023. Projections show a 300,000 increase in adults over the age of seventy-five in seven years -in 2030. While the largest concentration of those 65+ are in the seven-county metro area, *the highest percentage of older adults live in Greater Minnesota.*

The Legislative Task Force on Aging will propose a course of action *across generations* to ensure that an aging population will not lead to social isolation, poverty, declining health, and poor economic well-being for communities. Strategies to encourage local economic development opportunities for communities could include policies that encourage:

- redesign of local zoning in cities' infrastructure (housing options, transit) for healthy aging,
- incentives for business and philanthropic support,
- purchasing options for products and services that generate economic activity,
- financial support for multigenerational initiatives to encourage community development.

Our state requires an economic development model for aging that would include private and public partnerships that attract long-term investments in time, attention, and resources across our state. In a "longevity economy" we have opportunities to create jobs for both younger and aging populations.

The Legislative Task Force on Aging is a first step toward a multi-year Minnesota Statewide Plan for Aging which to be successful must reach scale with statewide participation and with every system that supports community life as we age.