

**Statement to the Minnesota House of Representatives State Government and Finance
Policy
Re: HF 2725**

April 3, 2025

My name is Leif Grina, I am the President of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council, a constituent body of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation. We are comprised of affiliated local or regional Union retiree organizations and individual members.

We strongly support passage of HF2725 to establish a Healthy Aging Subcabinet.

Who are we- the “aging” population of Minnesota? We're more than a population in need of services- we have given much to our communities and we still do. For example, according to a survey by the Wilder Foundation for the State Department of Human services, “Of Minnesota families using childcare, 46 percent use care provided by families, friends, and neighbors. Over half of the caregivers are grandparents – mostly grandmothers.”

We retired from work, not life. We are engaged in the civic life of our communities and our democracy- we vote in a higher percentage than any other age group in the state. And you may have noticed the elderly volunteers at our polling places.

We volunteer at food shelves and prepare meals for those in need. We take care of each other and our neighbors. We read to children in schools, we volunteer in our churches and in our communities in a myriad of ways.

We are a volunteer workforce of some 300,00 by one estimate.

We are more than a people in need – we are worthy of an investment.

And we want what everybody wants. We want to age with dignity, We want financial security, adequate transportation, safe communities, recreational opportunities, access to affordable quality healthcare and affordable housing.

We are an aging state. What does that look like?

- As of 2020 Minnesota has a larger population over 65 than school age children
- More aging women than men—25% more at 65 years and 78% at 85+ years
- Greater Minnesota’s aging population is a higher percentage than the Metropolitan area. And our aging population will continue to grow.
- Minnesota's population in the 65+ age group will more than double from 2024 to 2075.
- The population in younger age groups (0-19 years) shows a relatively stable but slowly declining trend.

These are huge changes and change will only continue. But as our state changes what is the plan and what are the policies to meet the challenges we face? What resources we do have are

scattered among a number of bewildering bureaucracies with no coordination and no coherent plan or policies.

Who is responsible to coordinate the resources and people we need? Who will develop the plan and policies that insure that transportation and healthcare, housing, and opportunities to be engaged in our communities will be accessible and affordable?

Who and how will we ensure that our aging population can continue to contribute and when unable any longer will live with dignity?

This bill goes a long way toward answering these questions and setting a vision for the future; aging is in everyone's future, so doing it well is in everyone's interest.

Leif Grina

President of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation