

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE FILE 1616
MINNESOTA SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND VETERANS

MARCH 1, 2023

Dear Senators:

The Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council is a constituent body of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation composed of nineteen affiliated Union retire organizations. Our Council strongly supports the adoption of the recently negotiated contract between the State and Healthcare Mn&Ia, SEIU covering PCA's, SF1616.

Minnesota, along with the nation, is experiencing rapid growth of elders in our population.

A few numbers:

*As of 2020 Minnesota has a larger population over 65 than school age children

*From 2010 to 2030, the number of Minnesota older adults will double in population, 680,000 in 2010 and 1.3 million in 2030

*From 2030 to 2050, the number of Minnesota older adults over 85 will triple

*More aging women than men—25% more at 65 years and 78% at 85+ years

*Ageism plus sexism results in twice as many more Minnesota older women living in poverty than men, with 17% of men relying exclusively on Social Security compared to over 33% of aging women

*Greater Minnesota is home to a larger share of older adults, 482,026 to 466,815

Elders overwhelmingly prefer to age in their communities and their homes. Aging in place is better for the physical, mental and emotional health of elders and is cost effective relative to institutionalization. According to a study by the University of Missouri in Columbia:

“Aging in place preserves seniors' independence, [and] reduces care costs, ...

In a four-year analysis of AIP, the total care costs for residents were thousands less than traditional care options.

Costs for

living and health care never approached the costs for nursing homes and assisted-living services. In addition, AIP residents had

improved mental and physical health outcomes.”

But there are a number of barriers to aging in place. PCA's play a vital role in overcoming barriers that are due to medical or physical issues. They are an important part of keeping elders in the comfort and security of their homes and communities as we age. And they play a vital role in avoiding the much higher costs of institutionalization of our elders. However given the wages in particular we find it very difficult to retain PCA's on a consistent basis. We are hopeful therefore that the contract recently negotiated will help stabilize the workforce and strongly urge passage of SF 1616.

Sincerely,

Leif E. Grina,

President