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January 23, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Re: AARP Support of SF 2; Paid Family and Medical Leave

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

AARP strongly supports Senator Mann's Senate File 2, establishing a paid family and medical leave program. Paid leave benefits would help thousands of Minnesotans support their spouses, aging parents, and other loved ones while protecting their financial security.

AARP has repeatedly called for state lawmakers to support working family caregivers and urge you to pass a paid leave program this year. With the option to take paid leave, caregivers, especially women, can stay in the workforce longer. It is estimated that one in 5 women leave the workforce earlier because of caregiving responsibilities and lose an estimated \$324,000 in wages, benefits, and retirement income.

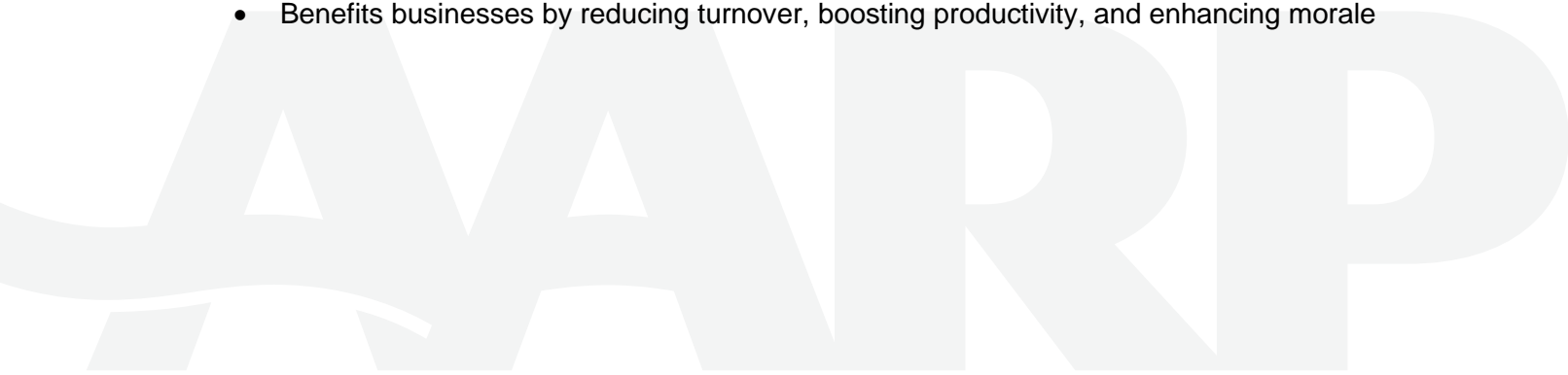
Family caregivers are less likely to be offered paid leave by an employer – nearly 6 in 10 say their employer does not provide paid family leave. This makes it very difficult for them to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities, whether driving a loved one to a doctor's appointment, taking time off to help someone recovering from surgery, or assisting with activities of daily living such as eating or dressing for a more extended period.

Minnesota's family caregivers are the backbone of our long-term care system and play an essential role in caring for their loved ones and delaying expensive nursing home care. The economic contribution of Minnesota's 640,000 unpaid family caregivers is estimated to be \$8.6 billion.

Despite the clear financial contributions of caregivers, their emotionally, physically, and financially strenuous work is not recognized with pay when they need to take time off work to care for loved ones.

The benefits of implementing policies that provide financial support to caregivers are clear:

- Allows older Minnesotans to age in the comfort of their homes and communities
- Retains women's participation in the workforce
- Reduces reliance on nursing home which are often paid for by taxpayers
- Benefits businesses by reducing turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale



Passing a state-paid family leave program is essential in supporting their critical work. Thank you in advance for your support of this critical piece of legislation. If you have questions, please get in touch with AARP Advocacy's Director, Mary Jo George, at mjgeorge@arp.org or 651-271-6586.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy McLeer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "M".

Cathy McLeer
State Director, AARP Minnesota