

MINNESOTA RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING, INC.

201 North Broad Street, Suite 102
Mankato, MN 56001



March 11, 2025

Minnesota Senate Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senior Meals and Services – Support of SF 2383

To Chair Hoffman and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

I want to thank Senator Maye Quade for introducing **Senate File 2383**. This bill represents an investment for older adults in Minnesota.

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (MNRAAA) serves twenty-seven counties in Southwest Minnesota. Most of these counties are rural and feature vast food deserts. This bill would support our nutrition and service providers' efforts to reach older adults who may have difficulty going to a store, preparing a meal, or facing economic restraints.

Over 26% of the current population in MNRAAA's territory is over 60. From that population, many live alone and face social isolation. The negative impacts of social isolation are well documented and include congestive heart failure, depression, diabetes, and more. Nutrition services and supportive services assist in combatting social isolation while empowering older adults to remain in their homes and communities.

The long-forecasted increase in the number of older adults who require help with basic needs to continue to live in their homes has arrived, but funding to support them has not kept up.

According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, annual government payments for long-term services and support for older adults are projected to grow 71% from 2023-2035. The services provided through the aging network — a network of state, regional and local agencies — are some of the most cost-effective ways to support older adults, often preventing more expensive emergency room or institutional care.

Additional funds are urgently needed. Providers are already cutting home-delivered meals, closing nutrition sites, and reducing their capacity to provide rides and homemaker services. The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging projects that 487,000 fewer meals will be available to older adults in 2025 than in 2024, a loss of service for 1,900 seniors.

I appreciate your commitment to serving Minnesotans and your continued support of older adults in our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason W. Swanson, HSE
Executive Director