



volunteer driver
COALITION

March 8, 2021

Representative Zach Stephenson, Chair
House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee

RE: House File 586 – Volunteer Driver Definition

Dear Chair Stephenson and Members of the Committee:

As the co-chairs of the Volunteer Driver Coalition, we write to urge passage of House File 586 (Murphy) as amended by the author. Without changing current law, some insurance companies will continue to treat volunteer drivers as commercial drivers-for-hire. When this happens, volunteers are charged higher vehicle insurance rates for the sole reason that they are a volunteer driver. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain volunteers.

This bill will protect and strengthen volunteer driver programs and help to ensure that volunteers can continue to transport older adults and people with disabilities to medical appointments and community services across Minnesota. In the most recent survey of the Volunteer Driver Coalition, nonprofit and local government programs reported providing more than 168,000 trips annually, serving 77,000 people.

Volunteer drivers contribute their time and use their own vehicles to provide rides. The organizations that sponsor them require that their volunteers are trained to provide safe rides in safe vehicles. Volunteers help frail older adults and others who have functional or cognitive limitations by providing door-through-door access to medical care and to community supports and services.

As the older population continues to grow – at an unprecedented pace, volunteer driver programs must be viable and thrive for the essential role they play in access to healthcare and to the broader community. These programs help to ensure equitable access to medical care, reduce isolation and provide safe rides. In some communities in greater Minnesota, these programs are the only option for transportation services.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, contact Sherry Munyon at 612-723-4245 or smunyon@capitolaccess.us.

Sincerely,

Sherry Munyon, Co-Chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition
MN Public Transit Association/Capitol Access

Dawn Simonson, Co-chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition
Executive Director, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging

Mary Quirk, Co-Chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition
Executive Director, Living at Home Network

Lori Vrolson, Co-chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition
Immediate Past Chair
Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging

About the Coalition

The Volunteer Driver Coalition came together in 2019 with leadership from the Minnesota Public Transit Association and support from the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Living at Home Network. Members include nonprofit organizations, counties, Area Agencies on Aging, Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils, associations, and others that support the Coalition's advocacy initiative to strengthen volunteer driver programs in Minnesota.

Coalition Members

AARP Minnesota
Age Well Arrowhead
Aitkin County CARE, Inc.
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Anoka County Community Action Program
Anoka County Medlink
Anoka County RSVP
ARDC/Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Argyle Hope Program
Arrowhead Transit-Volunteer Driving Program
Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)
Big Woods Transit/Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
B's Homecare Inc. & B's Adult Day Center
CARE - Community Action Respecting Elders
Care Partners of Cook County
Carver County
Center for Victims of Torture
Central Community Transit
Central MN Council on Aging
City of Sandstone
Community Partners
Como Park/Falcon Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program
Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging
DARTS
East Central Regional Development Commission/East Central Regional Transportation Coordinating Council
East Side Elders
Faith in Action for Cass County
GoDakota
Hamline Midway Elders
Hastings Family Service

Headwaters RTCC
Help At Your Door
Hennepin County
Highland Block Nurse Program
Horizon Health
Keystone Community Services
Living at Home Network
Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors
Metro Meals on Wheels
Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration
Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Minnesota Association of Townships
Minnesota Community Action Partnership
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging
Minnesota Public Transit Association
Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Minnesota Social Service Association
Neighborhood Network for Seniors
Neighbors, Inc.
North End -South Como Block Nurse Program
North Shore Area Partners
Northeast MN Regional Transportation Coordination Council
Northwest Regional Development Commission
Northwoods Caregivers
Paynesville Area LAH/BNP aka R.O.S.E. Center
Prairie Five C.A.C., Inc.

Productive Alternatives Volunteer Driver Program
Rainbow Rider
Region Five RTCC
Roseville Area Senior Program
Scott County - Smartlink
Semcac
Senior Services Consortium of Ramsey County
Seven County Senior Federation
Southeast Seniors
Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
The Nokomis Healthy Seniors Group
St. Anthony Park Area Seniors
Stephen Living at Home/Block Nurse Program
Three Rivers Community Action
Tri-County Action Program
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.
United Community Action Partnership
Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Inc.
Volunteers of America - MN Our Home
Warren S.O.S.
WeCAB
West Central MN Communities Action, Inc.
Wright County Community Action