March 7, 2022

**To**: Members of the House Workforce Committee

**Re:** **AARP Support of HF 1200, Paid Family Medical Leave**

AARP strongly supports Representative Richardson’s HF 1200, which establishes a paid family and medical leave program and fully funds the program for two years. Paid leave benefits would help thousands of Minnesotans support their loved ones while also protecting their financial security.

 AARP has repeatedly called for state lawmakers to support working family caregivers and urge you to seize the opportunity to pass a paid leave program this year. Without the option to take paid leave, some caregivers cut back on their work hours or drop out of the workforce entirely. 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 the nearly 600,000 unpaid family caregivers in Minnesota is estimated to be $760 billion. 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 homes which are often paid for by taxpayers
* Benefits businesses by reducing turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale

Despite the clear economic 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. Passing a state-paid family leave program is an essential step in supporting the critical work they do.

Thank you in advance for your support of this critical piece of legislation. If you have questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact AARP Advocacy’s Director, Mary Jo George, at mgeorge@aarp.org or 651-271-6586.

Sincerely,



Cathy McLeer

State Director

AARP Minnesota