SENIOR MEALS &
SERVICES COALITION

March 17, 2026

The Honorable John Hoffman
Minnesota Senate
2111 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman, Vice Chair Fateh, Ranking Member Rasmusson and members of the Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the more than 40 member organizations that form the Senior Meals and Services Coalition, we write seeking your support for the proposed policy changes to the state's Senior Nutrition Program. Our immediate request is your support of Senate File 4508/House File 4210, which clarifies statutory language to increase efficiency in nutrition service delivery and provide flexibility for innovation.

Our coalition represents Senior Nutrition Program providers, area agencies on aging and other organizations invested in the health and wellness of older Minnesotans. We know firsthand the difference the Senior Nutrition Program makes for thousands of Minnesotans each year. This vital support helps older adults live independently and safely in their homes, avoiding more expensive institutional care. In 2025, more than 16,000 older adults benefitted from home-delivered meals, and over 18,000 had their nutritional needs met through congregate dining services. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of older adults receiving home-delivered meals last year were at high nutrition risk. Forty percent (40%) of home-delivered meal recipients needed help with three or more Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as medication management, driving and preparing food. The Senior Nutrition Program puts meals into the hands of the people who need them most.

Despite the impressive reach of the program, we know the need is much greater. Of the 1.1 million adults age 65+ in Minnesota, approximately 99,000 live below the poverty line. The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging projects that funding changes to the program will result in 452,000 fewer meals being served in 2026 as compared to 2025. This shortfall is coming at a time when providers are challenged by steep increases in food costs.

SF4508/HF4210 helps meet the growing need for senior nutrition services by modernizing the program statute. Changes to the Senior Nutrition Program policy as proposed in the bill would improve efficiency in service delivery and provide greater flexibility for innovation. SF4508/HF4210 clarifies how the funds are administered and how they can best serve older Minnesotans. It also allows innovative delivery methods such as food boxes, meal kits and other options beyond prepared meals.

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Minnesota's area agencies on aging administer Senior Nutrition Program dollars using a comprehensive accountability framework to prevent, detect and correct instances of fraud, waste and abuse. Every dollar is justified, documented and fully traceable to ensure program effectiveness and integrity.

Your support for SF4508/HF4210 represents a commitment to the health and well-being of Minnesota's aging population. Thank you for considering this important legislation. More information about the bill and our coalition is available on our website: seniorservicesmn.org.

Respectfully,

Dawn Simonson
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Senior Meals and Services Coalition Member
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CC: Laurie Brownell
Director, Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
Co-Chair, Senior Meals and Services Coalition

CC: Stacy Lund
Director of Food Access, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud
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