



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 11, 2026

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Representative Moses
Room 12 West
State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Re: Assembly Bills 970, 973, 1001, and 1002

Dear Chair Moses,

On behalf of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging, we are writing today in support of the recommendations resulting from the Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services. We are grateful that the Assembly elevated the opportunity to share the importance of issues pertaining to older adults in the State of Wisconsin and we encourage you to vote in support of Assembly Bills 970, 973, 1001, and 1002. The priorities included in these bills reflect the desire of older adults throughout Milwaukee County, and the State of Wisconsin, to age safely with dignity and in their communities.

Assembly Bill 970 and 1001—Grants for Community Emergency Medical Services, Grants for Falls Prevention Awareness and Initiatives and Funding for Grants for Community Emergency Medical Services and Falls Prevention Initiatives

Falls are the number one cause of injuries in older adults and are a key driver of emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions. \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin, which includes Medicare, Medicaid, and out-of-pocket expenses. In 2024, there were 25 Falls Prevention workshops in Milwaukee County that served 273 unique participants. With the support of Healthy Aging Grants, Milwaukee County can expand its evidence-based wellness programs to more residents, which can reduce the burden of care that falls on the healthcare system and public safety. We are supportive of the approach that combines community paramedicine with community-based falls prevention programming. This proactively moves up from a practice of reaction to prevention. Increased investment in both programs would help keep Milwaukee County's older adults safe, independent, and thriving.

Assembly Bill 973 and 1002—Grants for Economic Support Specialists and Funding for Grants for Economic Support Specialists

The ability to embed an Economic Support Specialist within the Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) could allow seamless navigation of public assistance programs for individuals with disabilities and older adults. This pilot project aims to expedite the processing of Medicaid applications for ADRC customers, improve the ADRCs and Income Maintenance Consortia's reach to customers who are unable to leave their home, and offer Economic Support consultation with ADRC professionals on complicated cases to further improve their options counseling. Embedding an Economic Support specialist within the ADRC transforms this process from a reactive hurdle into a proactive, person-centered service.

The Milwaukee County ADRC has exemplified the No Wrong Door model of service delivery. No matter how an individual connects to our system of care, they will have access to all services and resources offered by the ADRC, Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, and all community partners. However, our ADRC received 49,896 calls in 2025 on a variety of topics. While we have services in place to respond to these concerns in one way or another, the need in the community is very high. Direct connection to an Economic Support Specialist will provide another pathway for residents to receive support navigating benefit programs.

As the aging population continues to grow across Wisconsin, we are grateful that this Task Force convened to consider opportunities to improve the lives of older adults in our communities. The series of recommended bills provides common sense changes that address financial wellbeing, physical wellness, and community-focused supports. We are supportive of Assembly Bills 970, 973, 1001, and 1002 and hope you will vote in their favor.

Thank you for your continued support of Milwaukee County's older adults. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Denise Callaway
Chair
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging



Brian Peters
Legislative Advocacy Officer
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging