



**March 6, 2025**

Senate Bill 2254 – Support

March 6, 2025

House Transportation

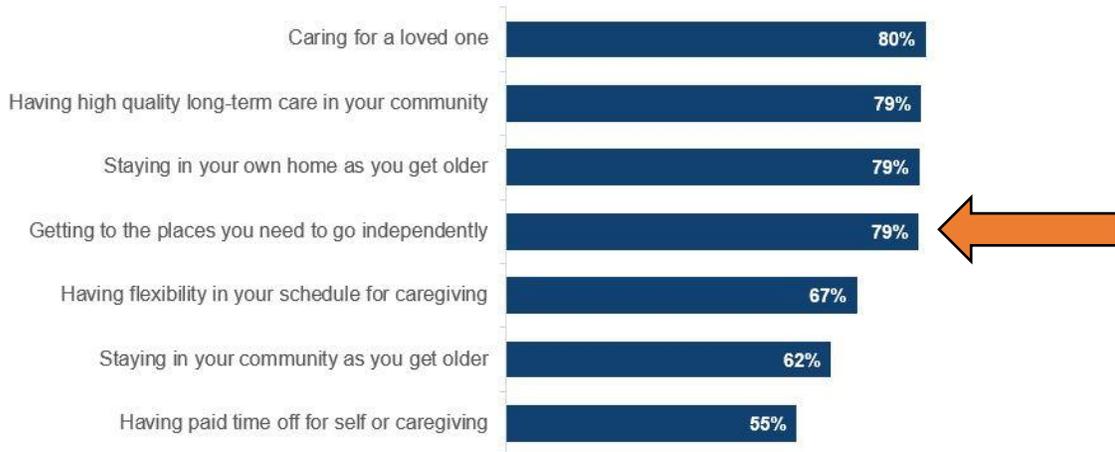
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Chair Ruby and members of the committee,

I'm Janelle Moos, Associate State Director of Advocacy for AARP ND and we stand in support of SB 2254. As you know, AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with approximately 83,000 members in North Dakota. Our mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age.

Transportation greatly impacts older adults' ability to choose how they live as they age. It is an important issue for individuals 50+ in North Dakota as evidenced by our 2020 Vital Voices Survey of older adults. As you can see in the chart below 79% of respondents said "Getting to the places you need to go independently" is extremely or very important to older North Dakotans.

### Important Independent Living Issues



11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important') (n=722)

Whether by choice or necessity, public transportation is a critical service for many people, including older adults. Older adults outlive their ability to drive by 7-10 years. According to AARP Public Policy Institute's analysis of the 2017 National Household Travel Survey, fully 18 percent of older adults 65 and older do not drive, and 35 percent of women over 75 don't drive at all.

For decades our nation's transportation policy has favored personal vehicles over other ways of getting around our communities. This has reduced transit options for those without access to a personal vehicle, such as some older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Yet, transit service in many areas of the country is lacking because of insufficient funding to maintain or expand service, land use patterns that make it hard for transit to efficiently operate, and policies that prioritize the personal automobile over public transit options. In fact, 45 percent of Americans have no access to public transportation. A growing number of communities are continuing efforts to expand transit service and improve on-demand service to provide better transportation options.

Specialized transportation services, such as door-to-door paratransit and escorts to physician's offices, are critically important for many older adults yet these too are not always readily available.

Transit reduces isolation particularly for seniors and people with disabilities, by providing access to grocery stores, medical services, jobs, and schools. Imagine what your life would be like if you were totally dependent on others for your transportation, economic constraints restricted your ability to pay for taxis or rideshare trips, and you lived in a community where there were

no taxis and only rideshare trips available. This will be the likely reality for residents in your community if this supplemental funding isn't approved.

In closing, we are asking the committee to support SB 2254.

Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.