

## DFL Senior Caucus Endorsement Questions for Hennepin County Commissioner Offices

The DFL Senior Caucus promotes the active participation of Minnesota seniors in the political process, giving a voice to seniors in Minnesota elections and politics. Our goal is to affect public policy by bringing focus and accountability to senior issues, and by working to elect public officials who support these issues.

Responses to the questions below must be submitted in the online form accessible by clicking this link: [Hennepin County Commissioner submission form](#).

The DFL Senior Caucus will revoke an endorsement if:

1. You are not endorsed by your convention, or
2. You support a candidate who is running against a DFL-endorsed candidate.

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provide in the first question. Please forward the email to Tony Scallon, Political Director for the Minneapolis Chapter: [tscallon@msn.com](mailto:tscallon@msn.com)

### Taxes

1. The proposed county property tax increase for 2024 is 6.5%, double what it was in 2023. This is an increase that will be a hardship for many seniors in our county. Do you believe Hennepin County senior citizens are fairly taxed? If so, why and how? If not, what can and should be changed? What ideas do you have to more fairly tax seniors?
2. Market experts are forecasting a major Minneapolis and suburban office market drop in taxable valuations. The reductions in business value will occur in FY 2025 shifting tax burden onto residential properties. How will the County account for this loss of tax base?

### Housing

3. Age-friendly communities are places that enable all residents to be engaged, connected, and be included across the life span. Hennepin County joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2019. Will you actively support completion and implementation of the Hennepin County age-friendly action plan?
4. What health, mental health, income, and social services for seniors who wish to remain in their homes should the county prioritize and fund? What leadership role will you play in doing so?

5. Many families are caregivers to aging parents or grandparents. What do you propose to do to provide for assistance to these families?
6. Hennepin has supported several Healthy Seniors groups, which provide nursing services, exercise classes, social groups, and ride-share transportation to medical care, to allow seniors to stay in their homes. But the County Board began cutting funding for these very successful groups in 2019. Is the County Board still committed to reducing funding for these groups, or has it changed its policy?

## **Environment**

7. The Hennepin County Board voted unanimously to begin closure plans, including options, for the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center at their regular meeting in October 2023. One reason for this vote was that the Minnesota Legislature this year, changed the law to say that energy generated by the facility can no longer be treated as renewable. The Center generates from \$3 million to \$8 million in electrical output, \$25 million in tipping fees, as well as significant metal recovery. This facility was built at a cost of \$160 million. What options are being considered?

## **Libraries**

Seniors are frequent users of the library system.

8. What can the county do to add senior-friendly library services—for example: increase social engagement, make materials more accessible, use more volunteer or paid staff? What role will you play to make these changes happen?

## **Public Safety and Transportation**

9. What role do county commissioners play in ensuring public safety? What have you done (or what will you do) to ensure seniors can safely live in neighborhoods throughout the county?
10. As seniors age, our transportation needs change. We need viable and safe rideshare options for seniors with and without physical disabilities. We need convenient, safe street parking for those of us who drive, ride-share options including seniors providing rides for other seniors for medical and nonmedical purposes, and buses/light rail/bus rapid transit routes for transit-dependent seniors. How will you work to expand options that can keep us mobile, safe, and engaged in our community?
11. Our current County Attorney allows juvenile offenders to go home immediately. What solutions will improve safety for Hennepin County citizens?

12. Now that the County Home School has closed, what is your plan to divert young juvenile criminals from continuing to commit crimes?

## County Governance

13. Employees with lived experience and shared common perspectives with clients can establish trust that leads to better service outcomes. The county has worked to expand its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts for several years. How has the client-serving workforce changed because of these efforts? Where is more change needed in employee diversity? How diverse is the county at the administrative level?
14. What are your ideas to change the labor/management relationships with bargaining unit leaders and their members to foster and restore trust and communication and partnership in serving county residents?
15. Running as a DFL candidate, do you support these core Minnesota State DFL positions: (Source: Minnesota State DFL Platform) “No discrimination against any person on the basis of race, creed, religion, immigration status, sex, sexual or affectional orientation, HIV status, gender identity or expression, marital or homemaker status, disability or age.” **Yes** \_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_