

***Living the Questions***  
**Listening to Leaders Session**  
**League of Women Voters**  
**November 18, 2005**

## **Living the Questions**

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging is a collaborative of thirteen leading nonprofit organizations with statewide service and advocacy presence. Formed in 2004 to advocate for home and community-based services the Council has met with community leaders to raise awareness of and discuss the demographic, social and economic issues related to the aging of the Baby Boom generation through an initiative called *Living the Questions*.

Through a series of *Listening to Leaders* dialogue sessions, the Council is gathering information about community aging issues as viewed by foundations, housing and community developers, civic groups, education officials, transportation representatives, faith communities, disability organizations, business and industry, and others.

More information about the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging can be obtained from [www.mnlcoa.org](http://www.mnlcoa.org).

## **Background**

The League of Women Voters was the first citizen group that participated in a Listening to Leaders Session. As a result, the discussion was very broad and included international perspectives and issues. The majority of participants were older, although there were some younger women present. The participants felt it was very important to continue this dialogue. They were especially interested in participating in a dialogue with other leaders in a conference format.

## **Key Questions**

1. How do we have a productive discussion about end-of-life issues? Is there a way to be more deliberate about the spending of medical resources at the end-of-life? When can we talk about assisted suicide?
2. How does society respond to discrepancies in funding allocated to different age groups (i.e., the cost of nursing home care for a month is equal to the cost of educating a young person for a year)?
3. Will communities embrace the importance of comprehensive planning and housing for all generations?

4. What are the work arrangements that are suitable to older women who must continue working to remain out of poverty?

## Other Questions

- How can we strengthen and encourage government to look at longer range investments and policymaking?
- Are there any safeguards or preventive methods to protect older women from financial insecurity and poverty in their later years?
- Retirement life – How do we capture the skills and resources of individuals in their “retirement years” and utilize them to address community issues?
- Should there be aging councils at every level of government? How can they be a meaningful voice?
- Why would we build anything that would segregate older people?
- Given the projections of an aging society what is the total cost going to be to our systems?
- Is it time for another Minnesota Miracle in order to pay for an aging population?
- What are the community values around aging?

*The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging exists to coalesce the resources and power of senior consumer, advocacy, social and health service organizations, and the individuals we serve and represent, to boldly advocate for and achieve positive system changes for elders in Minnesota.*  
[www.mnlcoa.org](http://www.mnlcoa.org)