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March 31, 2022

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
1021 O Street, Suite 6240
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
1020 N Street, Suite 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for an Allocation of \$2,985,000 for Supporting the Village Movement for Sustainable Aging in California

Dear Chairs Ting, Skinner, Arambula, and Eggman:

I respectfully write to request a one-time allocation of \$2,985,000 over three years in order to invest in the growth, impact, and sustainability of California's village movement to fulfill objective #90 of the Governor's Master Plan for Aging, which seeks to promote and adapt the village model of volunteerism and services to reflect the strengths of California's diverse communities.

Villages are intentional, community based, intergenerational, membership organizations led by older adults to support healthy aging in communities. They deliver social care to low, moderate, and middle class Californians: high-quality social connections; access to resources; mutual aid and support; opportunities for volunteerism and social integration; and contributing to the greater good. Providing for older adults' social/emotional needs addresses a core social determinant of health and mitigates the negative physical and mental health impacts of isolation, loneliness, and depression. Throughout the pandemic, villages stepped up to assure older adults stayed connected to community and services. Many villages experienced increases in membership as older adults realized they needed support to maintain mental and physical health.

Villages offer social and educational programs in brick and mortar locations and online. Villages vet, train, and then match volunteers with members to arrange for services that are typically delivered in the home. Currently 46 villages engage 10,000 + older adults and intergenerational volunteers. Village Movement California (VMC) is the statewide coalition of villages and the entity responsible for administering State funding.

Villages provide the types of support that older adults seek as nearly 90% of older adults want to continue living in their own homes and communities as they age, regardless of income. Currently, publicly funded services that support aging-in-community in California are primarily focused on low-income older adults and those who qualify for Medi-Cal. Village members are typically Medicare recipients, enrolled in either Traditional Medicare or Medicare Advantage plans. Some Village members are dually eligible for Medi-Cal and Medicare. Most are moderate and middle income and part of the “forgotten middle.” Approximately 10% of Village members statewide are low income.

Support of the village movement will help build the Village infrastructure in California for seeding and supporting village development and operations with a focus on underserved communities and older adults of diverse identities, and launch seven new villages and expand nine existing villages. This support will also be helpful in scaling a technology platform to help boost civic engagement among older adults in Villages, and integrating the Villages into the Department of Aging’s Hubs and Spokes Program to ensure access to care.

Without the sustainable infrastructure that the Village movement brings, it could lead to an over-utilization and higher levels of long-term care and long-term services and support paid for primarily by the State’s Medi-Cal program.

To help support the Villages movement to help achieve key objectives of the Governor’s Master Plan for Aging, I am requesting \$2,985,000 over three years for the purposes above.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Levine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARC LEVINE