RESOLUTION Supporting increase Funding to Minnesota State Services for the Blind to SErve Seniors Losing their vision

*WHEREAS,* experience has long shown that seniors who lose their vision can maintain independence and quality of life if they receive specialized adjustment to blindness training on an individual basis or through group classes; and

*WHEREAS,* adjustment-to-blindness training to learn new skills for independence, build self-confidence, and develop positive attitudes about blindness can be provided for a one-time cost of 20 to 50 percent of a single month of assisted living or nursing home care which would otherwise go on for years, wasting state funds that could be better spent on meeting real medical needs; and

*WHEREAS,* State Services for the Blind's (SSB)'s Senior Services Unit is the primary (and in many cases the only) source of funding for the necessary specialized adjustment to blindness services for blind seniors in the state of Minnesota; and

*WHEREAS,* a recent study by the Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota describes an impending “Silver Tsunami” in which the number of seniors losing vision will expand exponentially in the coming years; and

*WHEREAS,* in 2015, approximately four thousand seniors were served by SSB through its established network of service providers—the highest total ever in a given year and 25% more than were served in 2014; and

*WHEREAS,* State Services for the Blind has received no appropriation increase for many years, and the number of available direct service staff who locate seniors and provide limited teaching and referrals has decreased over time; Now therefore

*BE IT RESOLVED* that the \_\_\_ party call upon the Governor and the Legislature to provide a major increase in funding to the Senior Services Unit of State Services for the Blind, enough to meet current needs and head off the upcoming “Silver Tsunami” crisis.