

COMMENTARIES

Counterpoint | *No, America's potential is not being hoarded*

Aging isn't a special interest group, and it isn't the problem. Ageism is.

By **Rajeane Moone**

Guest contributor(s) to the Minnesota Star Tribune

MAY 12, 2026 AT 4:58AM



"Aging is not a special interest group. It is a universal human experience," Rajeane Moone writes. (Jeff Chiu/The Associated Press)

Opinion editor's note: *Strib Voices publishes a mix of guest [commentaries](#) online and in print each day. To contribute, [click here](#).*

...

A recent New York Times commentary that appeared in the Minnesota Star Tribune frames aging as a problem to be managed rather than a reality to be embraced. The commentary, written by Samuel Moyn (["Older Americans are hoarding America's potential"](#) April 27; see also Readers Write, April [29](#) and [30](#)) echoes a familiar – and harmful – narrative: that older adults are obstacles to progress, clinging to resources and influence at the expense of younger generations. This framing is not only reductive, it also perpetuates ageism at a moment when the country can least afford it.

Aging is not a special interest group. It is a universal human experience. Every policy choice, workplace norm and cultural message that diminishes older adults ultimately diminishes all of us. When Moyn suggests that older Americans are “hoarding” opportunity, he ignores the structural forces that shape economic mobility across the life span – rising inequality, stagnant wages, limited access to education and systemic barriers that have little to do with age.

Moreover, this narrative erases the diverse contributions older Americans across the country and here in Minnesota make every day. Older Americans are workers, caregivers, volunteers, mentors and civic leaders. They support families financially and emotionally, often serving as the backbone of multigenerational households. In health care, education and community organizations, their experience is not a bottleneck – it is an asset.

What’s more, the idea that opportunity is a finite resource – something older adults must relinquish for younger people to succeed – is a false choice. Intergenerational collaboration, not competition, is what strengthens economies and communities. Research consistently shows that age-diverse workplaces are more innovative and resilient. Communities that invest in people across the life span see better outcomes for everyone.

If we are serious about unlocking America’s potential, we should be focusing on building systems that support people at every stage of life. That means rethinking outdated notions of retirement, creating flexible work environments, investing in lifelong learning, and addressing age discrimination in hiring and advancement. It also means recognizing that longevity is one of society’s greatest achievements – not a burden to be managed.

The language we use matters. When we describe older adults as hoarders of opportunity, we reinforce harmful stereotypes that marginalize millions of people. We risk normalizing policies and practices that exclude them, rather than designing a society that includes and benefits from their participation.

We should be asking a different question: not how to limit the influence of older Americans, but how to build an age-inclusive society where people of all generations can thrive together. Embracing aging is not just a moral imperative – it is an economic and social necessity.

America’s potential is not being hoarded. It is being overlooked when we fail to value the full contributions of people throughout their lives.

We are all aging. We are all connected. We can overcome societal challenges. Rather than blaming aging and older adults, we can embrace opportunities and solutions to ensure that our communities across Minnesota thrive.

Rajean Moone is the associate director for policy in the University of Minnesota Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation and is a member of the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council.



© 2026 StarTribune. All rights reserved.