

INTRODUCTION

The Policy Book: AARP Public Policies 2011–2012

AARP's membership comprises nearly 40 million Americans age 50 and over. Our members include workers and retirees, individuals in their 50s at the peak of their earning years and those over 80 living alone, people with comfortable standards of living and those struggling with minimal resources. And of course, older Americans have many of the same concerns as younger members of our society—particularly about jobs, health care, and the neighborhoods in which they live.

Developing public policy recommendations that serve the interests of a group as diverse as older Americans is a formidable task. But we concentrate on the issues of most interest to our members as they age: economic security, health care, access to affordable quality long-term care, creating and maintaining livable communities, consumer protections and ensuring that our democracy works better for us all.

The *Policy Book* integrates input the association gathers from members and others through communications, policy forums, surveys, and polls. With this input, and after analyzing policy options, AARP's National Policy Council recommends specific public policies to the association's board of directors (see *Setting Public Policies* for a detailed description of this process). The board approved the policies in this edition on February 24, 2011. AARP intends the *Policy Book* as a guide for volunteers and staff in advocating for change over the next two years.

The 2011–2012 edition of the *Policy Book* is available on paper, CD-ROM, and the Internet (www.aarp.org/policybook).