

# 2008 AARP Voters' Guide

## Michigan State House District 44

How to use the AARP Voters' Guide:  
Here's how this Voters' Guide works. AARP asked key questions about issues important to our members and their families of each major candidate for this race. Each candidate was allowed up to 125 words to answer each question. AARP did not edit or modify those answers. The candidates were asked to check the support or oppose circles. The candidates may have chosen not to check a circle.

AARP has provided a summary of our position for each of the issues.

- Pass this guide on to friends and family.
- Share your views with the candidates.
- Ask for clarification from any candidate whose answer seems unclear.

Be sure to vote on November 4.

[www.aarp.org/elections](http://www.aarp.org/elections)

Get the facts.  
Use the power.  
**Vote.**

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*The power to make it better.®*

## Health and Financial Security

**Q:** *Are you committed to working with your fellow elected officials, regardless of party, to develop and implement policies that provide all Americans with access to quality, affordable health care and lifetime financial security?*

**AARP's Position:**

Commit to help end gridlock by working across party lines.

**Support**     **Oppose**

**Mark Venie (D)**

Commit to help end gridlock by working across party lines.

**Support**     **Oppose**

**Eileen Kowall (R):**

Commit to help end gridlock by working across party lines.

**Support**     **Oppose**

Millions of Americans worry about their health and long-term financial security. They fear the future will not be as prosperous for their children and grandchildren. They face competing demands of affording health care, saving for retirement, sending children to college and supporting aging parents. At the same time, soaring health care costs constrain employers' ability to grow and compete.

AARP believes that providing quality, affordable health care and improving lifelong financial security for all Americans should be legislative priorities.

I would be committed to working together to find ways for all people access to health care. We also need to find ways to encourage people to save, not only for short-term necessities and emergencies, but for their long-term financial needs and security.

## Retirement Savings Programs

**Q** ■ *Do you support or oppose the creation of a state assisted savings plan for Michigan workers who lack access to a retirement savings plan at work?*

### AARP's Position:

Support or oppose creation of state assisted savings plan

Support  Oppose

### Mark Venie (D)

Support or oppose creation of state assisted savings plan

Support  Oppose

### Eileen Kowall (R)

Support or oppose creation of state assisted savings plan

Support  Oppose

More than half of American workers lack access to a retirement savings plan at work. One new approach to expand savings is to use a state's experience and expertise to provide workplace retirement savings programs for small employers that are unable to provide them because of high fees.

When groups of small employers join together these fees drop enough to be affordable. Once the program is established, operational costs would be paid by participants. The state would be reimbursed for the costs of establishing the plan, and would serve as overseer of the plan, but would have no fiduciary or legal liability for its performance.

AARP supports adoption of this kind of state assisted retirement savings plan.

Small businesses should be able to offer their employees workplace retirement plans without the disincentive of high fees. However, I don't believe the state should be directly involved in managing and administrating retirement plans. I would encourage the state to act as a "facilitator" instead, by assisting small businesses and business associations to come together to form larger pools. The private market could then work with businesses to develop solutions for the growing demand for small business retirement plans.

## Reforming Long-Term Care

**Q:** *Will you support or oppose legislation that creates a “one-stop shopping” system for long-term care supports, services and payment options? Will you support allowing consumers to choose where they will receive state-funded long-term care services and to select the service provider?*

### AARP's Position:

A single agency for “one-stop shopping.”

Support  Oppose

Make single point of entry available statewide beginning in 2010.

Support  Oppose

Allow consumers to choose where they will receive services and select the service provider.

Support  Oppose

### Mark Venie (D)

A single agency for “one-stop shopping.”

Support  Oppose

Make single point of entry available statewide beginning in 2010.

Support  Oppose

Allow consumers to choose where they will receive services and select the service provider.

Support  Oppose

### Eileen Kowall (R)

A single agency for “one-stop shopping.”

Support  Oppose

Make single point of entry available statewide beginning in 2010.

Support  Oppose

Allow consumers to choose where they will receive services and select the service provider.

Support  Oppose

**The candidate chose not to mark a circle.**

Many Michigan residents and their families, who need long-term care to maintain independence, often face confusion searching through the maze of service options scattered throughout many different agencies. Unfortunately, most options are geared to nursing homes rather than home and community based care, which most people prefer. It would make this process much easier to have information, assessment, and eligibility determination for services in a single agency so residents have one-stop shopping.

AARP supports two major changes in the state's long-term care system:

- Creation of “one-stop shopping” approach for long-term care information, assessment, eligibility determination, and payment options.
- Allowing consumers to choose where they will receive state-funded long-term care services and to select the service provider.

**“One-stop shopping”:** My sisters and I are learning first-hand the difficulties of navigating the system and the various options in trying to figure out what would be the best situation for our Dad. It is confusing to say the least. A comprehensive, informational source would certainly be appreciated. I would like to get feedback from the four pilot programs currently underway, before determining if this is the best way to go.

**“Single point of entry”:** Statewide expansion of the single-point entry system should be based on feedback from the four pilot programs that are currently in place.

**“Allow consumers to choose”:** These decisions ultimately affect the quality of life for individuals and can actually impact their life expectancies. If individuals are capable of staying in their homes while receiving support services and this is the most economically viable solution, they should not be ordered into nursing homes in order to receive state-funded services. However, if extensive medical treatment and care are needed and are cost-prohibitive to deliver in the home other options must be considered.

**Q:** *Will you support or oppose legislation that requires pharmacies to post the prices of the 150 most prescribed drugs and their generic equivalents? Will you support or oppose legislation requiring drug companies to report what they spend on marketing to physicians?*

**AARP's Position:**

Require pharmacies to post prices

**Support**     **Oppose**

Require drug companies to reveal marketing expenses to physicians

**Support**     **Oppose**

**Mark Venie (D)**

Require pharmacies to post prices

**Support**     **Oppose**

Require drug companies to reveal marketing expenses to physicians

**Support**     **Oppose**

**Eileen Kowall (R)**

Require pharmacies to post prices

**Support**     **Oppose**

Require drug companies to reveal marketing expenses to physicians

**Support**     **Oppose**

The candidate chose not to mark a circle.

Prescription drug prices continue to increase at nearly twice the rate of general inflation and more employers are eliminating prescription drug coverage for their workers and retirees. AARP supports policies to help people afford needed prescription drugs, such as access to information on comparable generic drug prices.

Consumers need to know if pharmaceutical sales representatives are influencing physicians to choose expensive brand name drugs over less expensive generic drugs.

AARP wants to ensure a free and open marketplace that makes available the lowest possible prescription drug prices. We support legislation that:

- Requires pharmacies to post the prices of the 150 most prescribed drugs and their generic equivalents; and
- Requires drug companies to report to the state what they spend on marketing to physicians.

**“Require pharmacies to post prices”:**  
 While I’m very much in favor of keeping drug prices down, I’m hesitant to force more mandates on businesses that may result in compliance costs. In fact, most pharmacies are quite willing to quote prescription prices to consumers. Also, drug prices change often and even websites that offer Rx price comparisons warn that some quotes might be 6 months old and recommend consumers call their local pharmacies for price quotes. It should also be noted that generic drugs may not always be the most cost-effective choice for every consumer, due to differing co-pays and negotiated Rx prices in insurance plans. Again, it seems the best avenue would be for each consumer to determine the most cost-effective alternatives for his or her particular circumstances

**“Require drug companies to reveal”:**  
 Doctors should not be unduly influenced by pharmaceutical manufacturers to prescribe unnecessary or more costly drugs. On the other hand, pharmaceutical reps do play a role in educating doctors and also supplying them with samples that benefit many consumers. The question is how to separate legitimate educational expenses from those geared solely at increasing sales of a particular drug product.  
*Answer continued on next page...*

Also, the business practices of pharmacy benefits management companies should be monitored. Recently, Attorney General Mike Cox settled a case with Caremark for encouraging doctors to switch patients to brand name drugs under the guise those patients and/or health plans would save money. In fact, these switches may have increased costs to patients and health plans.

More information from AARP on next page.





*If you are not registered to vote, go to [www.aarp.org/makeadifference/politics/](http://www.aarp.org/makeadifference/politics/) and look under Tools for a form to fill out and send to your local voter registrar (the address will be there). Go to the same website if you need an application for an absentee ballot or to find out if your state allows early voting and what dates that will occur.*

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## **Voter Information Inside**



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