



2008 AARP Voters' Guide

Utah House of Representatives District 28

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.

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ECONOMIC SECURITY for OLDER WORKERS

Q ■ What steps will you take to prepare Utah for an aging workforce? Do you support or oppose increasing funding for job training for older workers? Do you support or oppose the elimination of the Social Security/Unemployment Insurance offset?
 ■ (Please limit your response to 125 words)

AARP's Position:

Increase funding for job training for older workers

Support Oppose

Eliminate the Social Security / Unemployment Insurance offset

Support Oppose

Brian King (D):

Increase funding for job training for older workers

Support Oppose

Eliminate the Social Security / Unemployment Insurance offset

Support Oppose

Jeffrey Morrow (R):

Increase funding for job training for older workers

Support Oppose

Eliminate the Social Security / Unemployment Insurance offset

Support Oppose

Traditional sources of retirement income, such as Social Security, employer pensions, and personal savings often are not enough. More than 37 million in the workforce are over 50, a number that will rise as the workforce grows older and works longer.

AARP supports flexible employment practices, such as job sharing, flextime, and phased retirement. Employer training programs should be made available to help workers of all ages.

Many retirees must reenter the workforce to supplement their Social Security retirement benefits or to get health insurance. Only four states—including Utah—reduce unemployment insurance benefits for those who lose a job while on Social Security. AARP opposes this practice, as it penalizes those who qualify for unemployment insurance yet are denied the coverage they've earned.

In my law practice I often represent individuals whose private disability claims have been denied. I am sensitive to the need to ensure we provide opportunities to older and disabled workers for part-time or modified work when we can do that. I do think it would be proper to eliminate the social security/unemployment insurance offset. These individuals, through their labor, have earned the right to unemployment compensation without any offset in the social security benefits.

Providing job training for older workers can be accomplished through the local community college. I do support eliminating the Unemployment Insurance offset. My own mother has been working into her late 70s. It has provided her such vitality to remain self-sufficient. Her social security alone was just insufficient to meet her basic financial obligations. She also enjoys going to the senior citizen's center and a neighborhood gym everyday. Seniors can benefit from the opportunity to remain in the work environment, socialize and stay physically active.

Q: How would you propose to change policy to provide more accessible and affordable home and community-based care options to older Utahans and those with disabilities? (Please limit your response to 125 words)

AARP's Position:

Rebalance the long-term care system by removing funding bias favoring nursing home

Support Oppose

Establish programs allowing certain nursing home residents to transition into less restrictive settings

Support Oppose

Shifting existing Medicaid long-term care dollars to home and community based programs

Support Oppose

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Support Oppose

AARP is committed to achieving long term care reform so more people needing these services can remain in their homes and get services in the community. In Utah, the majority of long-term care spending is directed to nursing homes and institutions. Utah is ranked 47th in the country regarding the percentage of Medicaid dollars going to home and community based care of older people and adults with physical disabilities.

Several states have saved money and improved patient satisfaction with quality of care by shifting the allocation of resources, so a greater proportion provides services in the community and not in nursing homes. AARP supports the right of people to have more choice where they want to get services and how they manage their own care.

On the first question, the extent to which the long-term care system should be rebalanced by removing funding bias favoring nursing homes, I'm sorry that I'm not hampered by too much information on this question. I simply don't know whether I would agree with the factual predicate of the question, whether there is a funding bias favoring nursing homes in the status quo. For that reason, it's hard for me to provide an intelligent response the question of what changes I would propose to current policies to provide more accessible and affordable home and community based care options. I can say that I agree it would be good policy to enhance the ability of individuals to transition to the least restrictive setting for care that can be provided without endangering the individual's welfare. My father is 91 and resides in an assisted living center. It's a great place and he's well cared for. There is really no feasible way he could be cared for at his home. But for those who can safely be treated in a home setting and who would like that, it makes sense from all perspectives to do that. Similarly, our resources for medical care and government aid are most efficiently utilized by providing care in the lowest intensity level of care possible. That's also the environment that the person receiving the care is most likely to choose.

Several new assisted living facilities and several new senior living centers have been constructed in recent years. There is a warm inviting and motivating environment to encourage self-sufficiency but remain available as needed.

Q: In the face of escalating cost, how would you reform the health care system to make it available, affordable and accessible for every Utahan?
(Please limit your response to 125 words)

AARP's Position:

Provide increased subsidies for health insurance for eligible participants based on ability to pay

Support Oppose

Provide incentives for preventive care

Support Oppose

Create "medical homes" for more integration and coordination among providers

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AARP supports reforms to increase access to affordable, high-quality health care coverage for all Utahns, particularly those without public or private insurance or those at risk of losing coverage.

Making health care affordable is a shared responsibility among government, business, health care providers and individuals. Other reform options include opening existing public programs (e.g. Medicaid) to new categories of people who are uninsured.

My law practice also involves a substantial amount of work for individuals and healthcare providers whose claims have been wrongfully denied by health insurers and other private payers of healthcare. I agree that we need to fundamentally reform the way our healthcare is delivered and financed in this country to enable each person to have better access to a basic level of healthcare. This will not only improve the medical conditions of those without any healthcare coverage, it will save taxpayer money that is currently spent in providing healthcare to those who have to go on Medicaid or other government programs to receive necessary care. Providing a basic level of healthcare will also ensure that individuals with treatable and preventable illnesses will more likely receive the treatment they need before a more acute, and expensive, condition develops.

I would support using means tested credits and incentives in our state and federal tax systems for both individuals and employers to extend this basic healthcare coverage to all individuals. I'd like to get more information on AARP's "medical homes" proposal before I weigh in on that.

I support AARP's health care initiatives for seniors.



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If you are not registered to vote, go to 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