



2008 AARP Voters' Guide

State Assembly District No. 81

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

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Legislative Priority

Question:

What will be your top state priorities if elected, and how will you work to break the gridlock to get things done on these issues?

AARP POSITION

AARP believes that providing quality, affordable health care and improving lifelong financial security should be top legislative priorities. AARP surveys show that Wisconsinites are worried 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: affording health care, saving for retirement, sending children to college and supporting aging parents.

Increasingly partisan political gridlock stands in the way of the ability to solve major issues. Wisconsinites want results from elected leaders, not promises without action. It's time for individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government to come together to find solutions.

CANDIDATE:

KELDA HELEN ROYS
DEMOCRAT

I am an energetic, effective leader with deep roots in our district. As executive director of a statewide women's health organization, I helped pass bipartisan legislation to improve access to health care. In a legislature dominated by partisan squabbling and big money special interests, I brought Democrats and Republicans together to create real change and pass common sense legislation. That's why I've been endorsed by more elected and appointed leaders, including Kathleen Falk, than any of my opponents.

I am running for assembly because I want to pass health care for all, build a strong, forward-looking economy with family supporting jobs, ensure great public education for our kids, and stand up for seniors' economic security and independence. I ask for your vote on Sept. 9th.

CANDIDATE:

MICHAEL RYAN
REPUBLICAN

Candidate chose not to respond.

Health Care Reform

Question:

How would you reform the health care system to make it a quality system that is affordable and accessible for every Wisconsinite?

AARP POSITION

AARP believes that all Wisconsinites deserve affordable, quality, and accessible health care. An individual's health care costs, including premiums, deductibles and out-of-pocket costs should be limited to between 5% and 10% of income. In an AARP Wisconsin survey, 69% of respondents age 50 -64 said the healthcare system is in a "state of crisis" or has "major problems." Those who have insurance and those who are uninsured respond similarly to this question. Over half of all respondents said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported healthcare coverage for all Wisconsin residents.

Three quarters of Wisconsinites age 50-64 without health insurance, are working. Half of Wisconsin's uninsured workers are self-employed or work for small employers. Many Wisconsinites are underinsured, paying too much for inadequate coverage.

CANDIDATE:
KELDA HELEN ROYS
DEMOCRAT

Wisconsin needs affordable, quality healthcare for all. Our current system is expensive, inefficient, and leaves nearly 500,000 uninsured – we spend \$18 billion on healthcare, but a third goes to administration. Insurance companies decide what care patients receive, and people's opportunities are limited due to our employer-based system. We need fundamental change – and that takes effective political leadership.

I have a proven track record of success, passing meaningful legislation to improve healthcare access. As executive director of a statewide women's health organization, I spent four years fighting for patient-centered healthcare. I'll use my expertise to craft a smarter, healthier system that costs less, emphasizes prevention, preserves patient choice and privacy, ensures long-term and chronic disease care, and drastically improves public health and our economy.

CANDIDATE:
MICHAEL RYAN
REPUBLICAN

Candidate chose not to respond.

Health Care Cost

Question:

How do you propose to rein in the cost of health care while maintaining or improving the quality of and access to health care?

AARP POSITION

Across Wisconsin, individuals and employers are telling us that they can't afford health care; cost sharing is increasing and benefits are shrinking.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, health insurance premium costs nationwide have increased a cumulative 78% between 2001 and 2007. In an AARP Wisconsin survey, over eight in ten respondents said that making healthcare more affordable for all residents is extremely or very important.

AARP supports benefit packages that provide necessary care including chronic disease management, prescription drug coverage, prevention and wellness, mental health services. AARP also supports stronger oversight of the insurance industry.

AARP believes information technology, such as electronic medical records, would result in better, more efficient care, fewer mistakes and, ultimately, lower costs.

CANDIDATE:
KELDA HELEN ROYS
DEMOCRAT

While technology can make our system more efficient, the only long-term solution is to move to a simpler, more affordable system covering everyone. I support providing comprehensive healthcare to everyone in Wisconsin – the same coverage legislators receive. By eliminating conflicts about who pays and what's covered, we drastically reduce administrative costs, which account for nearly a third of healthcare costs.

Emphasizing preventive care and ensuring consistent chronic disease management creates enormous long-term savings as well. Finally, because everyone is covered, taxpayers won't have to pick up the tab for unnecessary emergency room visits. I am open to any plan to improve quality, affordable healthcare access, and I'll work to preserve and expand coverage and services currently received by Wisconsin seniors, like CareWisconsin and SeniorCare.

CANDIDATE:
MICHAEL RYAN
REPUBLICAN

Candidate chose not to respond.

Senior Care

Question:

Do you support or oppose the continuation of SeniorCare at current benefit levels? How would you ensure the SeniorCare program continues beyond December 2009?

AARP POSITION

AARP Wisconsin and others are working on a plan to improve SeniorCare and provide an even more meaningful benefit to most participants of the program. The plan will be cost neutral to the state and will need legislative approval. According to a recent AARP Rx Watchdog Report, the cost of prescription drugs rose by more than 50%, on average, between 2002 and 2007. In Wisconsin about 100,000 Wisconsinites age 65 and older get help with the cost of their prescription drugs through SeniorCare. However, SeniorCare's future is uncertain because federal funding for the popular program will end in December 2009.

CANDIDATE:

KELDA HELEN ROYS
DEMOCRAT

I strongly support continuing SeniorCare, an essential program to supplement Medicare Part D, which is deeply flawed. Prescription medications are a critical and expensive part of healthcare for many seniors, and any healthcare system must cover drug costs to be effective. I will work with our federal delegation to ensure the reauthorization and continued funding for SeniorCare, and to close the "donut hole" and other coverage gaps in Medicare as well. Even with Medicare and SeniorCare, many seniors still experience significant out-of-pocket costs for their healthcare and especially prescription drugs. No one should have to choose between food, rent, and medicine.

I will bring energetic and effective leadership to ensure health and economic security for seniors, and I ask for your vote on September 9th

CANDIDATE:

MICHAEL RYAN
REPUBLICAN

Candidate chose not to respond.



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

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