



AARP Urges Finance Committee to Consider Impact on Seniors During Deficit Debate

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WASHINGTON—AARP today submitted written testimony for the Senate Finance Committee's hearing on Budget Enforcement Mechanisms. As members of the committee and their colleagues consider ways to reduce the federal deficit, AARP is fighting to ensure arbitrary cuts do not jeopardize the health care and retirement security of America's seniors and future retirees. As a part of its ongoing effort to protect Medicare and Social Security, the Association today announced a new advertising and grassroots effort to ensure benefits older Americans have earned through years of hard work are not cut during the deficit debate.

Excerpts from AARP's statement to the committee follow:

"Older Americans truly understand that budgets matter and that we all need to live within our means. But they also understand that budgets impact real people—federal programs can make meaningful differences in peoples' lives and help ensure that older and disabled Americans can live independently and with dignity as they age. ... AARP believes that solutions to our nation's long-term financial challenges should be thoughtful and balanced, not arbitrary and across the board."

"AARP strongly believes that Social Security, a self-financed program important to both current and future generations of Americans who pay into the system, should not be cut in any effort designed to achieve arbitrary overall federal spending targets."

"...[T]argeting it now for arbitrary, across-the-board cuts is unfair and unnecessary, and will most assuredly mean significant reductions in benefits for not only current beneficiaries, but for their children and grandchildren as well."

"...[I]n the face of declining pensions, shrinking savings, and longer life expectancies, Social Security deserves to have its own national conversation that focuses on preserving and strengthening the retirement security of Americans and their families for generations to come."

"As the Committee—and other Members of Congress—continues to grapple with proposals to address this country's long-term deficit, AARP urges you to reject proposals that simply shift health care costs onto Medicare beneficiaries and do not address the underlying problem of rising health care costs throughout the system."

"...[T]o truly tackle the issue of rising health care costs, we urge you to focus on changes that will incent high value care and reduce waste, fraud, and inefficiency that occurs throughout the entire health care system. While Medicare (and Medicaid) can play an important role in improving the delivery of health care, targeting federal programs alone is short-sighted and will not reduce overall health costs."

"...[W]e believe implementation of ... significant delivery system reforms will take time, planning, and commitment from Congress, the Administration, and providers to help achieve a new way of delivering care: one that focuses

on improving primary and coordinated care for beneficiaries, and payment incentives that reward quality and improved outcomes rather than volume. AARP believes setting annual, arbitrary cost targets for Medicare will undercut this needed progress, and we strongly urge Congress not to enact such counterproductive measures.”

“While [the Independent Payment Advisory Board] is charged with looking at access and provider payment policies in the broader context of health system trends, we remain extremely concerned expanding IPAB could have a negative impact on Medicare beneficiaries’ access to care. We do, however, strongly urge Congress to maintain the consumer protections supported by AARP—including prohibitions on cutting benefits, raising seniors’ already high out of pocket costs, and rationing care—enacted as part of IPAB.”

“We urge Congress to not simply look at the numbers in the budget, but the real people that would be impacted by these budget driven changes and enforcement mechanisms. Literally, millions of people are counting on you.”

Details on AARP’s new campaign can be found at www.aarp.org/protectseniors.

For a complete copy of AARP’s statement for the record, please contact AARP Media Relations at 202-434-2560 or media@aarp.org.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world’s largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP’s millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.