May 1, 2019

The Honorable Bob Casey  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young  
400 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons  
127 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman  
448 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey, Senator Young, Senator Stabenow, Senator Collins, Senator Portman, and Senator Coons:

AARP, on behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, would like to thank you for introducing the Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) Act of 2019. AARP is pleased to endorse the BENES Act, which helps people approaching age 65 to punctually and properly enroll in Medicare, thereby preventing delays in coverage and costly penalties.

AARP has long recommended that the Social Security Administration should notify potential Medicare beneficiaries, well before they reach Medicare eligibility at age 65, about the steps to take if they want to enroll and about the circumstances under which premium penalties may be assessed. Your bill will direct the Social Security Administration to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to inform potential Medicare beneficiaries of their eligibility annually for five years prior to turning age 65. This will help ensure potential Medicare beneficiaries approaching age 65 have adequate time to plan for their transition to Medicare.

Equally important, your bill eliminates current coverage gaps in the fifth, sixth, and seventh month of a newly eligible Medicare beneficiary’s Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) and gaps in the annual General Enrollment Period (GEP), by establishing that Part B coverage begins the month immediately following enrollment in all IEP and GEP months. It also aligns the GEP with the annual Medicare open enrollment period for Medicare Advantage (MA) and Part D. This will help reduce confusion about when an individual has to enroll themselves in which program.
Again, thank you for your leadership and introducing the BENES Act. Please contact me with any questions, or have your staff contact Andrew Scholnick, of our Government Affairs staff, at ascholnick@aarp.org or 202-434-3770.

Sincerely,

David Certner
Legislative Counsel and Legislative Policy Director