2022 Legislative Priorities
Fighting for 50-plus Americans and their Families
AARP 2022 Legislative Priorities

On behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans, AARP’s legislative priorities in 2022 are focused on a range of issues including continuing to fight the coronavirus pandemic that has affected older Americans the most, lowering prescription drug costs, protecting and strengthening Medicare and other health care coverage, supporting family caregivers, increasing access to home and community-based services, helping people who are 50-plus to lead healthier lives, securing Social Security long-term solvency and adequacy, improving retirement income security, and ensuring that individuals of all ages have the financial resilience to take control of their retirement. We will continue our work at the state and federal level to address disparities in access to quality health and long-term care as well as advocate for policies that ensure all Americans have equal access to housing and can save for a secure retirement.

HEALTH SECURITY

COVID-19—Older adults are most at risk for COVID-19; nearly 95 percent of deaths from COVID-19 have been among people age 50 and older. The virus continues to be extremely deadly for older Americans and especially those with disabilities and people living in long-term care facilities. AARP is fighting to ensure that older adults have access to clear information to keep themselves safe, as well as vaccines and booster shots, especially those in nursing homes, congregate living settings, the homebound, and other hard-to-reach populations. The COVID pandemic has underscored that older adults need more options for where and how they receive the services and supports they need. Policymakers must also take urgent action to ensure that rapid testing is easily accessible, and that data reporting is comprehensive enough to make sure no population is left behind.

Affordability of Prescription Drugs—Fighting against high and rising prescription drug prices is a key priority for AARP. Older Americans use an average of 4 to 5 medications a month, often on a chronic basis, and have a median income of under $30,000 a year. As a result, this group is hit particularly hard by high and rising prescription drug prices. AARP is fighting hard to finally allow Medicare to negotiate the prices of some drugs, limit year-after-year price increases, and cap out-of-pocket costs in the Medicare Part D program. At the state level, we will continue our multi-year advocacy for solutions that will lower drug prices including greater access to low-cost generics, improved competition, lower out-of-pocket costs, creation of Affordability Boards that review and limit spending on drugs, bulk purchasing, stopping price gouging by manufacturers, and greater transparency in drug pricing and information for consumers.

Medicare—Over 60 million Americans count on Medicare for their health security. AARP will continue to advocate for protecting needed benefits, increasing quality and value, improving health outcomes, and ensuring the financial integrity of the Medicare program. This includes strengthening the program for beneficiaries through expanded coverage for needed services and responsibly extending Medicare’s solvency. AARP will also advocate for Medicare to fully cover a person, from head to toe, including hearing, dental and vision coverage. We will advocate for greater access to care and better care delivery, for example, through a skilled clinical workforce and incorporating new technologies. Moreover, we will continue to oppose any changes that weaken the Medicare guarantee or shift more risk and costs to older Americans.

Telehealth—The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of using technology to access and deliver clinically appropriate health care services. Telehealth can allow older Americans to see their health care providers conveniently and safely, allowing for increased autonomy and improving care coordination and treatment adherence. These advantages can be
particularly pronounced for members of underserved or rural communities, older adults with disabilities or physical limitations, and family caregivers—all of whom may experience significant barriers when seeking access to in-person care. AARP will continue to advocate at the federal and state level for increased access to evidence-based care via telehealth technologies.

The Affordable Care Act—AARP continues to support critical aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that address health care priorities that are important to all Americans age 50 and older, including: ensuring access to affordable quality coverage, preventing insurers from engaging in discriminatory practices based on age or pre-existing conditions, lowering prescription drug costs, providing new incentives to expand home and community-based services, and strengthening efforts to fight fraud and abuse. This work is of increased importance due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. AARP will also continue to educate consumers on the financial assistance available to purchase health coverage through the ACA.

Medicaid—AARP will continue to advocate for protecting individuals and families served by the Medicaid program, particularly older adults and persons with disabilities. AARP supports the investments in Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) in the American Rescue Plan Act and the Build Back Better Act. AARP’s efforts on HCBS focus on increased direct care workforce recruitment, retention, and training; improved utilization of nursing home transition and diversion resources; and increased access to, and navigation of, community supports to enable independent living. At the state level, we will also push for reducing waiver waiting lists, increasing access to adult day services, and empowering individuals to live independently.

AARP will also continue to push for states to expand Medicaid eligibility. AARP will work to ensure that states adhere to Medicaid continuous coverage requirements and prevent unnecessary coverage loss when conducting Medicaid redeterminations at the end of the public health emergency. Likewise, AARP opposes efforts to block grant or cap Medicaid funding that will endanger the health, safety, and care of millions of individuals who depend on the essential services provided through the program.

Family Caregivers—Family caregivers provide an estimated $470 billion in unpaid care annually to adult loved ones face daily challenges and need support. Paid leave allows working caregivers the flexibility and security to stay in the workforce, maintaining their economic security while caring for their loved ones. AARP supports enacting a new federal paid family and medical leave program to care for a family member, a new child, and one’s own medical needs. AARP will continue to support state action to drive progress on paid leave policies and strengthen existing programs. AARP will also continue to fight for enactment of the Credit for Caring Act to provide a federal tax credit of up to $5,000 to eligible working family caregivers, as well as various tax credits at the state level, to help offset a portion of caregiving costs.

Furthermore, we are calling on federal and state policymakers to provide respite care, a vital temporary relief for family caregivers, from their caregiving responsibilities. We support establishing federal and state respite benefits and programs that would assist family caregivers as they balance their caregiving responsibilities. We also endorse the continued development and implementation of national and state-level strategies to support family caregivers as laid out in the RAISE Family Caregivers Act. Additionally, many family caregivers have legal responsibilities which is why AARP is calling on lawmakers to update adult guardianship and power of attorney laws and practices.

Nursing Home Quality—Most adults age 50-plus want to live independently in their homes and communities, and this is generally more cost-effective than nursing home care. Additionally, individuals in nursing homes must have quality care and quality of life. AARP will continue to support the nursing home provisions in the Build Back Better Act, including creating a path to federal minimum staffing standards and providing registered nurse services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We also support a federal medical loss ratio for nursing homes to help ensure that they are devoting sufficient funds directly to resident care, safety, quality, and staff. Enforcement of quality standards is also critical. The paid workforce providing services in homes and other residential settings must be strengthened, including through increased compensation, sick or family leave, recruitment, training, and retention.
**Food Security**—The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) remains a lifeline for millions of people facing hunger, including 8.7 million households with someone age 50 or older. AARP will continue to fight for policies that help older adults access the food they need to stay healthy, including through programs like SNAP. Additionally, AARP continues to support strong funding for Older Americans Act nutrition services. We will work to address issues related to food insecurity and to reduce barriers that prevent eligible individuals from accessing assistance.

**FINANCIAL SECURITY**

**Social Security**—Approximately 65 million Americans currently receive Social Security. It is the largest source of income for most recipients and the benefits are modest. Many Social Security recipients have no other source of income. Congress must address Social Security’s long-term shortfall and ensure workers and retirees receive their earned benefits. Such considerations must focus on retirement security and be separated from any budget debate for this off-budget, self-financed program. AARP will continue to seek common ground for legislative action for Social Security adequacy and solvency. We will also continue to fight to protect current and future beneficiaries from any harmful reform efforts and advocate for much-needed improvements in the customer service provided by the Social Security Administration. We will also work to advance tax relief to Social Security beneficiaries who need it most at the state level.

**Pension and Retirement Savings**—Approximately half of the workforce does not have access to a retirement plan at work. AARP supports automatic savings initiatives that allow employers to offer access to retirement plans and help workers accumulate retirement savings, with automatic enrollment, payroll deduction, prudent investing, and portability as the key features. As more workers are part-time, self-employed, or part of the contingent workforce, these groups need adequate retirement savings coverage.

In 2022, AARP will seek federal solutions to expand access to retirement savings while complementing state-run programs. We will also continue to fight to ensure the rights and benefits of current pension recipients are not undermined or reduced. Retirement law traditionally required financial advisers to offer advice solely in savers’ interest, and AARP will collaborate with key parties to retain this important standard. As technology evolves, AARP will advocate to ensure disclosures are in the form savers want and need with adequate privacy and anti-theft protection, as well as strong document retention policies.

AARP continues to support state and local government defined benefit pension plans as one of the most reliable and cost-efficient ways to provide financial security throughout retirement. We will continue to encourage state and local governments to make their annual contributions to retirement systems. We will also continue to support efforts to shore up underfunded pension systems through changes that protect the long-term viability of existing defined benefit plans and the financial security of retirees.

**Age Discrimination**—AARP will carry on its advocacy for older Americans who face age discrimination in the workplace. A 2009 Supreme Court decision made it easier for employers to treat older Americans differently than other protected workers, and a subsequent Supreme Court decision reduced age protection for job seekers. It is long overdue for Congress to enact legislation to level the playing field for older workers who have experienced age discrimination. AARP will also advocate for legislative changes at the state level to enhance age protections in employment.

**Workforce Development**—The number of older workers is projected to increase as the U.S. population ages. Older workers need to have the option to work beyond the traditional retirement age. Older workers face long-term unemployment at a greater rate than their younger counterparts. Job training and reskilling opportunities are essential to keep them competitive and connected to the labor force. AARP will call for policies that promote job training and placement that account for the needs of older workers. AARP will seek to influence the upcoming reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and will continue to advocate for increased support of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) that helps thousands of low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work. AARP will also seek ways to address unemployment
by increasing the proportion of eligible workers and the funding for programs and focusing on job search assistance and training programs.

**Fraud, Financial Exploitation, and Consumer Protection**—Scams and frauds continue to be a financial threat to many older Americans. As technology evolves and automation becomes increasingly a part of our daily lives, scams are becoming more sophisticated and challenging to combat. Additionally, AARP must be vigilant in fighting all forms of elder abuse including financial exploitation. AARP will advance legislative and regulatory changes at the federal and state levels to better protect consumers from financial exploitation, scams, and fraud by focusing on prevention, intervention, training, recovery, and increasing enforcement.

**Tax Relief**—AARP will continue to work with policymakers to promote financial resilience for older Americans and their families through tax relief so they can keep more of their hard-earned money to cover rising costs and age in their own homes. This includes efforts to support and advance the elimination of the Earned Income Tax Credit age cap, state-level property tax relief, caregiver tax credits, and reducing state taxation of Social Security benefits.

**LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

**High-Speed Internet**—Fifteen percent of people 50-plus do not have access to high-speed internet, and 60 percent say that cost is a problem. Yet high-speed internet has become the technological foundation of modern society—employment, healthcare, education, commerce, and social and home life all now depend on affordable, reliable internet services. The recently enacted $1.2 trillion bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 sets aside a $65 billion investment to expand broadband access and equity across the nation. We will work to support broadband infrastructure investments to address key barriers to broadband adoption, which include affordability, availability, and quality of service, as well as digital skills development.

**Utilities**—AARP will advocate to protect the ability of older adults to access affordable and reliable utilities. Our work will include combatting efforts by utilities to unjustly increase the price of electricity and gas (including new or higher fees or surcharges), limit the right of customers to use the fuel of their choice, reduce oversight by consumer advocate groups, and ensure rate offerings and policies are fair. Increasing fuel costs—which lead to higher home heating (in winter) and cooling (in summer) expenses—pose a challenge for older adults who live on low or fixed incomes, leading them to make tradeoffs that directly impact their health and well-being. AARP will continue to work to preserve affordable and reliable utility services for household consumers.

**Housing**—AARP believes that increased choice in housing is critical to the ability of older adults to live independently in their homes and communities throughout their lifespan. More than three-quarters of people over 50 want to age in their home and communities, yet lack access to safe, affordable and accessible housing that would allow them to do so. AARP will continue to work at the federal and state level to support investments to achieve these outcomes. We will also continue our advocacy on fair housing and the Community Reinvestment Act to counter discriminatory and disparate treatment of individuals and communities. Our efforts will also be focused on ways in which local and state governments can accelerate the production of more diverse and affordable housing options, including accessory dwelling units and other “missing middle” housing solutions, and efforts to promote housing stability through anti-displacement and anti-discrimination advocacy.

**Transportation**—Transportation options are critical to the quality of life of older Americans. Older adults outlive their ability to drive from 7-10 years, and nearly 20 percent of people over 65 do not drive at all. AARP’s efforts in transportation will focus on how to offer safer, more reliable, and accessible transportation solutions for people of all ages and abilities. At the federal level, our efforts will be directed to leveraging transformational investments in public transit, roadway safety, and transportation alternatives funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 to ensure that they address the needs of older adults. The Infrastructure Act represents a critically important opportunity for rural areas and small towns to make new investments in rural public transportation systems. It also provides expanded access to federal funds by
localities. AARP state offices will continue to engage in state and local efforts to expand the safety and accessibility of a range of transportation solutions through Complete Streets and Vision Zero advocacy, investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and efforts to improve roadway safety—all of which are essential for age-friendly and livable communities that meet the needs of all.

**State and Local Infrastructure**—The Infrastructure Act presents multiple opportunities to ensure that infrastructure investments of all types are designed to enhance the quality of life and safety for older Americans. AARP will focus our efforts at the federal level to ensure that investments in resilience and disaster mitigation are made with the unique needs of older adults in mind so that future extreme weather events do not disproportionately impact older adults in the way that past events have. We will continue our advocacy at the state and local levels to ensure that public spaces and parks are accessible for all, and that federally funded efforts within states to repair and upgrade water, sewer and electrical systems are done in ways that enhance reliability and quality of service for people of all ages.

**GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

In 2022, AARP will continue our efforts to increase the accountability of government officials, promote access and transparency, and encourage civic engagement. We will advocate for fair and straightforward election procedures that help increase the participation of voters aged 50 and older. We will work to ensure that elections are free from fraud and abuse and that Americans’ personal information is protected through the process.

### AARP Offices

AARP has offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**ALABAMA:** Montgomery 1-866-542-8167  
**ALASKA:** Anchorage 1-866-227-7447  
**ARIZONA:** Peoria 1-866-389-5649  
**ARKANSAS:** Little Rock 1-866-554-5379  
**CALIFORNIA:** Pasadena, Sacramento, San Jose 1-866-448-3614  
**COLORADO:** Denver 1-866-554-5376  
**CONNECTICUT:** Hartford 1-866-295-7279  
**DELAWARE:** Wilmington 1-866-227-7441  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Washington 202-434-7700  
**FLORIDA:** Doral, Jacksonville, St. Pete, Tallahassee 1-866-595-7678  
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