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Monday, May 27, 2019

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AARP Texas Calls on Governor Abbott To Sign 'Incredibly Good' Bills for Older Texans, Consumers

AUSTIN, Texas – The 2019 session of the Texas Legislature resulted in passage of bills that AARP Texas is calling on Governor Greg Abbott to sign into law to improve the wellbeing of older Texans and other consumers.

"I am deeply appreciative to the members and leaders of the Texas Legislature for their work on behalf of older Texans," said AARP Texas Director Bob Jackson. "Now we look to Governor Abbott to sign into law some incredibly good bills."

Among the measures approved by the Legislature that AARP Texas is calling on the governor to sign into law are:

State Budget

House Bill 1: The proposed new state budget includes funding for AARP-backed priorities, including monies to cover needed pay raises for frontline **Adult Protective Services** caseworkers and investigators, operate the **Texas Lifespan Respite Care Program**, which provides respite services for family members who care for a person of any age with any chronic health condition or disability, and to expand the **Guardianship Compliance Program**.

Prescription Drugs

House Bill 2536: As one of the nation's most aggressive drug-price transparency measures, House Bill 2536 requires drug manufacturers to turn over information to the state when the cost of a drug increases more than 15 percent in a year, or more than 40 percent over three years.

Nursing Home Safety

House Bill 2050: To improve nursing home safety and stop the overdrugging of nursing home residents, House Bill 2050 requires the written consent of nursing home residents or their legally authorized representative before antipsychotics are prescribed. Prescribers or their designee would also need to inform the resident or designee of the risks and benefits, as well as alternatives, to the antipsychotics.

Guardianship

Senate Bill 31: Establishes a Guardianship Abuse Deterrence Program that gives courts the tools to ensure that guardians live up their important duty.

Surprise Medical Bills and Freestanding ERs

Senate Bill 1264: This landmark legislation would end surprise medical bills for Texans and establish an arbitration system for health care providers and insurers to resolve billing disputes.

House Bill 1941 would protect Texans from exorbitant charges in emergencies to stop price gouging at freestanding emergency rooms.

House Bill 2041: Reforms various marketing practices of freestanding emergency rooms in Texas by addressing terminology that can confuse consumers, such as whether they “accept” and “take” patients’ health insurance.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

House Bill 278: *Signed by the governor on May 16*, House Bill 278 will improve access to health care by ending unnecessary monthly, face-to-face unnecessary meeting requirements that advanced practice registered nurses must currently have with overseeing physicians.

Rural Broadband

House Bill 1960: *Signed by the governor on May 25*, House Bill 1960 will improve access to high-speed internet to underserved areas. The bill establishes a Broadband Council in the governor’s office.

House Bill 2422: To improve access to high-speed internet, House Bill 2422 would create a so-called “one dig” policy for Texas to help coordinate certain broadband projects at the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

Training for Older Workers

House Bill 1074: Ensures older workers are able to participate in workplace trainings. House Bill 1074 extends age-discrimination protections to include workplace trainings for workers age 56+.

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AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members, including more than 2.3 million in Texas, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.