AARP’S VISION
A society in which all people live with dignity and purpose, and fulfill their goals and dreams.

AARP’S MISSION
AARP enhances the quality of life for all as we age. We champion positive social change and deliver value through advocacy, information and service.

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AARP MICHIGAN 2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- **CARE Act – SB 352**
  Passage of the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act to help support and equip family caregivers when their loved ones go into the hospital and as they transition home.

- **Supporting Veterans**
  AARP seeks to honor and support our veterans by helping Michigan veterans and their families connect with benefits and employment opportunities.

- **Work and Save**
  Pragmatic solutions to encourage more employees to save for their future, particularly those in the private sector who don’t currently have access to a retirement plan at work.

- **Access to Health Care – Telehealth**
  AARP supports new telehealth laws that can allow older adults and their family caregivers new opportunities to manage their health and increase access to health professionals.

- **Access to Health Care – APRN Scope of Practice**
  Legislation to allow Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to use a greater scope of their training to treat Michigan patients.

- **Michigan Department of Health & Human Services budget**
  - Increased access to *MI Choice Medicaid Waiver, PACE, and In-Home Senior Services* to help older adults continue living safely and independently in their homes, rather than in more costly institutional settings.
  - *Respite Care* to give family caregivers a much needed break and a better opportunity to balance and maintain their work, caregiving and other responsibilities.
  - *Elder Abuse Prevention* and adequate resources for *Adult Protective Services*.

- **Affordable, Reliable Utilities**
  AARP fights to ensure that Michigan families have affordable and reliable electric, gas, and telephone services.

- **Retirement Security and Taxation of Pension Benefits**
  AARP supports efforts to repeal or reform the pension tax passed in 2011.

- **Fighting Fraud, Abuse and Financial Exploitation**
  Legislation to more effectively prevent, detect, and provide penalties for elder abuse, fraud and financial exploitation and to protect against loss of a senior’s home.

- **Uniform Adult Guardianship & Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act**
  Passage of the UAGPPJA to save money, time and heartache for Michigan families when a loved one needs a guardian and more than one state is involved.

- **Age-Friendly Communities**
  AARP supports state and local efforts to make Michigan communities more *age-friendly*.

- **Bolstering Michigan’s Economy**
  Michigan’s 50+ population is a positive economic driver in our state and presents growing economic opportunities.
AARP advocates on policy issues that matter the most to Michigan residents age 50 and over and their families. In our state legislative advocacy efforts, AARP relies on over 250 AARP Michigan volunteers, a state office headquartered in Lansing, and our 1.4 million Michigan members.

Each year, AARP Michigan publishes this document – our state legislative agenda – which we share with Michigan’s State Representatives, State Senators, the Governor, AARP members, our volunteers and the public.

In addition to publishing our agenda and sharing our suggestions, concerns, support, or opposition to bills throughout the legislative session, AARP Michigan designates certain votes by the Michigan Legislature as Key Votes. When AARP Michigan designates a particular vote as a Key Vote, we let legislators know how AARP would like them to vote on that bill and why. We also let them know that AARP Michigan will educate its 1.4 million members and all Michiganders about how each legislator voted on the bill through AARP’s various communications channels. At the close of the two-year legislative session, we publish our comprehensive End of Session Report.

As of 2015, over 3.6 million Michigan residents were age 50 and over. That’s 36% of Michigan’s population.

66% of the people who voted in the November 2014 election in Michigan were age 50 and over.

For more information about any of the legislation that AARP is following at the State Capitol, please feel free to contact:

- **Melissa Seifert**, AARP Michigan’s Associate State Director for Government Affairs, at (517) 267-8934 or MSeifert@AARP.org;
- **Mark Hornbeck**, AARP Michigan’s Associate State Director for Communications, at (517) 267-8935 or MHornbeck@AARP.org; or
- **Lisa Dedden Cooper**, AARP Michigan’s Manager of Advocacy, at LCooper@AARP.org.

You can also visit our webpage at www.AARP.org/MI or follow us on Twitter at @AARPMichigan or @LDeddenCooper for real-time advocacy updates.

*Updated as of 2/1/2016*
I am a 77 year old school bus driver. I care for my Mom who will be 102 this year and my aunt who will be 101. I moved the ladies into the same condominium complex that I live in back in early 2000. I have stood by as their adviser, grocery shopper, bill payer, medicine management and doctor appointment maker. I care for them 24/7, visiting their condo at least twice a day to make sure they have what they need.

The best part of my experience is having them close and to share their love every day.

- Glenn from Michigan

The CARE ACT – Senate Bill 352

**Status:** SB 352 passed the Senate 38-0 on 12/10/15 and was referred to the House Health Policy Committee. SB 352 is a legislative priority for AARP.

At any given time during the year, more than 2 million Michiganders perform a great labor of love: helping their older loved ones to live independently at home, where they want to be.¹ You can read some of their stories on AARP’s www.IHeartCaregivers.org website or in the October 2012 AARP Public Policy Institute report entitled *Home Alone: Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care.*²

AARP Michigan urges Michigan lawmakers to pass Senate Bill 352 (O’Brien), which would establish the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act in Michigan. The CARE Act is a commonsense solution to help support and better equip family caregivers when their loved ones go into the hospital and as they transition home.

The CARE Act would ensure that hospitals:

- **Record** the name of the family caregiver when a loved one is admitted into a hospital.
- **Notify** the family caregiver if the loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home.
- **Provide** the family caregiver an explanation and live instruction of any medical tasks – such as medication management, injections and transfers – that the family caregiver will need to perform at home.

Family caregivers shoulder great responsibilities. They are the first line of defense against older Americans being readmitted into hospitals or forced to move into nursing homes. Nearly half of these unsung heroes perform medical and nursing tasks that were once in the domain of only doctors or nurses. They clean wounds, handle feeding tubes, give injections, and manage complex medications – in addition to cooking meals, handling finances, doing chores, providing personal care like bathing and dressing, and more.

Michigan families have a proud history of taking care of themselves, and the CARE Act is one way to help families be better equipped to do so. Plus, it makes financial sense. Michigan caregivers provide unpaid care to their loved ones valued at approximately $15.5 billion per year.³ As a recent study by the *Journal of Healthcare Quality* concluded, adverse outcomes can be reduced significantly when hospitals adopt proactive, enhanced transition interventions to assure that family caregivers are well prepared when patients are discharged.⁴
Supporting Veterans

AARP seeks to honor and support our veterans by helping Michigan veterans and their families access resources and employment opportunities. In 2016 AARP Michigan is partnering with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency to help more Michigan veterans connect to the benefits they earned through their service. **AARP supports legislation to support veterans including:**

- **Senate Bill 155 (Gregory),** the Hire MI Heroes Act which would provide Michigan businesses with a one-time tax credit for hiring an unemployed veteran.  
  **Status:** SB 155 is currently on the Senate Calendar.

- **House Bill 4238 (Theis),** which would expand Michigan’s existing property tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans who are homeowners to also include the surviving spouses of U.S. military personnel killed in action. **Status:** HB 4238 has been referred to the House Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs.

- **House Bill 4064 (Yanez),** which would allow 100% disabled veterans who rent or lease their homes to qualify for Michigan’s Homestead Property Tax Credit using a formula based on the amount of rent they pay. **Status:** HB 4064 is currently on the House Calendar.

- In 2015 AARP supported **HB 4521 (Barrett), HB 4527 (Rutledge), SB 298 (Knezek) and SB 299 (O’Brien)** to make it easier for veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder to get trained service dogs and to provide legal protections for veterans who use service dogs. **Status:** These bills were all signed into law in October 2015 and took effect 1/18/16.

Work and Save

**AARP supports** pragmatic solutions to encourage more employees to save for their future, including the use of public-private partnerships. About 48% of Michigan workers age 18 to 64 in the private sector work for businesses that do not offer a retirement plan. In raw numbers, about 941,000 small-business employees in Michigan do not have access to a retirement plan at work, and about 751,000 workers at businesses with 100 or more workers do not have access to a retirement plan.\(^5\)

This is a problem for both the short- and long-term financial health of Michigan residents. Nearly 20 percent of people age 55 to 64 have no retirement savings,\(^6\) and even among those who have saved, many will likely outlive their retirement savings. The data also shows that saving at work is critical. Few households eligible to contribute to an Individual Retirement Plan outside of their jobs – only about 5% – regularly do so.
Having a convenient way to save for retirement at work can make a big difference. When offered the opportunity at work to save for their retirement, seven out of ten people choose to participate. Research shows that having access to a retirement plan at work increases savings rates by a staggering 1,300 percent.

AARP looks forward to working with Michigan’s business leaders and policymakers to develop a Michigan “Work and Save” plan that could be offered to employees by small businesses, such as an Employee Retirement Options Portal.

**Access to Health Care – Telehealth**

Telehealth offers promising opportunities to help people access health care in new ways and to make it easier for family caregivers to care for their loved ones. AARP supports enactment of telehealth laws that would improve an individual’s access to health care, in-home services and choice of providers, such as:

- Allowing providers to practice across state lines through the enactment of Interstate Licensure Compacts for physicians, APRNs or RNs
- Benefit parity in private health plans, Medicaid or state employee health plans
- Removing barriers that limit or prevent accessing care via telehealth
- Allowing reimbursement for remote patient monitoring
- Inclusion of family caregivers in telehealth legislation

One such bill is **HB 4583 (Tedder)**, which would include Michigan in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. AARP supports HB 4583 as a practical way to allow licensed physicians to more readily provide care in multiple states, facilitating both in-person care and the growing use of telehealth technology. For one thing, transportation to medical appointments is often an obstacle for older adults. Telehealth technologies can allow older adults and their family caregivers to consult with doctors and better manage their health without taking a trip to the doctor’s office every time. The Compact also makes it more likely that people who live part of the year in Michigan and part of the year in another state will be able to keep the same doctor all year round. **Status: House Bill 4583 passed the House 103-3 on 2/2/2016 and was referred to the Senate Committee on Health Policy.**

**Access to Health Care – APRN Scope of Practice**

Evidence-based reports from organizations including the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine and the National Governors Association recommend that states like Michigan increase patient access to care by allowing Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to practice to the full extent of their education and training.
As introduced, **Senate Bill 68 (Shirkey)** would allow Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to use a greater scope of their extensive training to treat Michigan patients. **AARP supported SB 68 as introduced** as a way to increase access to health care for Michigan patients and reduce unnecessary health care costs. Michigan has medically underserved areas all across the state where we have a shortage of primary care physicians in both urban and rural communities. In places with a shortage of primary care physicians, patients are more likely to face delays in care that can lead to worse health outcomes and higher costs.

Senate Bill 68 as introduced would remove outdated barriers in our Public Health Code that currently keep APRNs from providing care to the full extent of their education and training. The majority of states around the country have updated their laws to reflect the role of APRNs, but Michigan has yet to do so. **Status: SB 68 is currently on the Senate Calendar. The version of SB 68 as introduced is a legislative priority for AARP. However, AARP opposes the significantly different S-3 substitute for SB 68 that was reported by committee on 4/30/15.**

**Michigan Department of Health & Human Services**

The annual budget for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services contains several items that help determine the extent to which older adults in Michigan can continue to live independently as they age. The overwhelming majority of Michigan residents – 81% – want to “age in place” in their own homes and communities. Moreover, helping seniors to live independently and better equipping the family caregivers who make it possible for them to stay at home can **save the state money.**

- **MI Choice Medicaid Waiver and PACE.** AARP urges Michigan lawmakers to continue to increase access for older adults to home and community-based services through the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver program. Doing so is a **win-win** for our state. On average, Medicaid dollars can support nearly three older adults or people with physical disabilities in home or community-based services for every one person in a nursing home. AARP also supports the expansion of the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), and the potential for better patient experiences and outcomes through MI Health Link where it is available.

- **Non-Medicaid In-Home Senior Services.** Together with Michigan’s **Silver Key Coalition**, AARP urges Michigan lawmakers to continue efforts toward making Michigan
a “No Wait State” for non-Medicaid supports such as Meals on Wheels and other in-home services provided through the state Aging and Adult Services Agency and local Area Agencies on Aging. These services are extremely important to older adults and their families. Often, simply providing assistance with the “activities of daily living” – help with things like shopping, laundry, and cooking meals – can be the difference that allows someone to remain in their own home, rather than go to a nursing home. These services can also be the difference that allows an individual’s family caregiver to remain in the workforce, avoiding lost productivity for Michigan businesses.

- **Respite Care.** AARP urges Michigan lawmakers to increase access to respite care services for family caregivers. The vast majority (74%) of family caregivers have worked at some time during their caregiving experience, and more than half (58%) are employed in full or part time work. Respite care, such as adult day services or periodic visits in the home, can help provide family caregivers a much needed break and a better opportunity to balance and maintain their work, caregiving and other responsibilities.

### Affordable, Reliable Utilities

At the federal level and in states across the country, AARP fights to ensure that families have electric, gas, and telephone services they can count on, especially during extreme weather and other emergencies.

Telephone, energy, water and sewer bills typically account for about 7% of households’ expenses, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013 Consumer Expenditure Survey). Among individuals 65 and over this amount increases to 12%. AARP Michigan advocates for reliable and affordable services because utilities are essential to the health, safety and economic security of Michigan residents.

Beginning this fall, **AARP will work to educate and equip Michigan residents** regarding the telecommunications changes they will soon face so they can best protect themselves and their loved ones. In 2014 the Michigan Legislature passed legislation that AARP opposed which will allow telephone landlines to be phased out in Michigan beginning January 2017. Telephone service is a basic necessity for older adults, who are more likely than any other age group to still rely on landline service, not only to maintain social contact but also to preserve their health and safety both during emergencies and day-to-day, through the use of medical monitoring equipment and security systems.
Retirement Security and Taxation

The state of retirement security in Michigan doesn’t just matter to individual retirees, but to our state’s economy as a whole. Americans age 65 and over spend a higher proportion of their income than other age groups, and older adults also tend to spend a larger share of their income locally, purchasing goods and services - particularly medical services - that are produced locally. As a result, significant ripple effects are created across our state and local economies based on increases or decreases in the amount of money that Michigan seniors have available to spend.

Since 2011, Michigan seniors have faced a new state pension tax, the loss of their annual $2,400 senior tax exemption, and increased property taxes due to changes in the Homestead Property Tax exemption. For nearly 50 years, Michigan workers planned for retirement based on the promise that their pensions would not be impaired or diminished by the state. When the pension tax passed, it changed the effective value of their pension benefits after the fact. Meanwhile, residents have faced an erosion of their retirement security in other ways, including threats of cuts to Social Security and reduced confidence that the pensions promised to them as workers will be fully honored. AARP supports continuing efforts by the Legislature to mitigate the negative financial impacts of Public Act 38 of 2011, including:

- **Senate Bill 87 (Colbeck)**, which would repeal the pension tax and restore the homestead property tax exemption to the way it was before the changes in 2011. **Status:** SB 87 is currently before the Senate Committee on Finance.
- **Senate Bill 23 (Jones), Senate Bill 30 (Knezek), House Bill 4027 (Barrett), and House Bill 4086 (Graves)**, each of which would repeal the pension tax. **Status:** SBs 23 & 30 are currently before the Senate Committee on Finance. HBs 4027 & 4086 are currently before the House Committee on Tax Policy.
- **House Bill 4124 (Townsend)**, which would make a small but compassionate change to ensure that surviving spouses are not subjected to a tax increase as a result of the death of their loved one. **Status:** HB 4124 was reported from committee 6/3/15 and is awaiting a vote on the House floor.
- **House Bill 4278 (Howrylak)**, which would restore the homestead property tax credit to the way it was before the changes in 2011, and **House Bill 4871 (Howrylak)**, which would increase the homestead property tax credit caps for inflation. **Status:** HBs 4278 and 4871 are currently before the House Committee on Tax Policy.

Fighting Fraud, Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation

AARP Michigan urges Michigan lawmakers to continue to support multidisciplinary efforts to improve elder abuse prevention and detection in Michigan and to ensure adequate resources for Adult Protective Services. AARP supports legislation that would increase
penalties against individuals involved in vulnerable adult abuse such as HB 5046 (Hughes), HB 5047 (Leonard), HB 5048 (Bizon) and HB 5049 (Crawford). **Status:** These bills were introduced on 11/4/15 and referred to the House Committee on Criminal Justice. In addition, AARP supports legislation to more effectively prevent, detect, and provide penalties for fraud or financial exploitation, such as Senate Bills 49 & 50 (Smith), and legislation to protect against loss of a senior’s home. **Status:** SBs 49 & 50 were reported from committee 2/12/15 and are currently on the Senate Calendar.

AARP has also launched the Fraud Watch Network, a free resource for AARP members and nonmembers alike. Michigan residents of any age can sign up to receive real-time scam alerts and access to tools to protect themselves from fraud and identity theft, including extensive research on how con artists think, information about upcoming local events, and a fraud hotline. For more information about AARP's Fraud Watch Network, contact our AARP Michigan state office.

**Uniform Guardianship Jurisdiction – When Caregiving Crosses State Lines**

**Status:** UAGPPJA legislation has not been introduced in Michigan during the 2015-2016 session, but AARP Michigan has bill language available.

AARP Michigan urges Michigan lawmakers to adopt the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act (UAGPPJA) because it will save money, time and heartache for Michigan families when a loved one needs a guardian and more than one state is involved. Michigan is one of only 8 states yet to adopt UAGPPJA.

In recent years, rather than adopt UAGPPJA, Michigan has enacted emergency guardianship provisions piecemeal, missing out on some of the benefits of UAGPPJA, and in some ways actually increasing the likelihood that families will need to endure duplicative guardianship proceedings and conflicts when more than one state is involved. For this reason, **AARP opposes SB 270**, which passed the Senate 5/14/15 and has now been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.
The UAGPPJA would not change Michigan’s underlying guardianship laws, or change the process for cases that only involve people and property within the state of Michigan. There are three types of circumstances in which the UAGPPJA applies:

- **Multiple Jurisdictions.** The UAGPPJA creates a clear process for determining which state has jurisdiction to appoint a guardian if more than one state is involved and there’s a conflict. Example: Mom’s a snowbird who lives in Michigan during the summer and Arizona during the winter.

- **Transfer.** The UAGPPJA outlines a procedure for transferring a guardianship to another state and for courts to accept such a transfer, helping to eliminate expense and wait-time. With the UAGPPJA, if a family moves from one state to another, their guardianship transfers with them through a shortened process in both states.

- **Out-of-State Recognition and Enforcement.** The UAGPPJA helps facilitate enforcement of guardianship orders in other states by allowing a guardian to register their orders in other states. Example: A wife serves as guardian for her husband who has Alzheimer’s and the closest appropriate care facility is over the border in another state.

### Age-Friendly Communities

**AARP supports** state and local efforts to make Michigan communities more *age-friendly*. The essential pillars of an age-friendly community are: satisfying work and volunteer opportunities; the availability of health care and long term care services that promote independence, choice, and dignity; a wide range of safe and accessible housing options; safe and affordable transportation; neighborhoods and outdoor spaces such as parks and recreational facilities that are safe for all; social participation and multi-generational interaction; and access to information and communications technology.

Becoming a more age-friendly state or community creates opportunities to attract and maintain employers, and provides appeal for all ages, not just older adults. AARP looks forward to working with Michigan policymakers to harness the economic opportunities arising from our state’s changing demographic profile.

### Bolstering the Michigan Economy

In the aggregate, Michigan’s 50+ population is a **positive economic driver** in our state, and it presents growing economic opportunities. Despite being only 36% of the state’s population, the aggregate economic contribution of Michigan’s 50+ population accounted for 47% of Michigan’s GDP in 2013 ($203 billion).
Rather than lengthening extreme old age, the 30 years added to lifespans in the 20th century have resulted in a longer middle age – extending the period when workers are at their most productive and creative, and representing a major, often untapped resource.

People age 50 and over represent a significant share of Michigan’s workforce. 59% of people age 50-64 are employed, and people over 50 represent 33% of Michigan’s total workforce. Michigan’s 50+ residents are also innovators. Of the employed Michigan population, 12% of those 50-64 are self-employed entrepreneurs, compared with 7% of those 25-49.

Too often, debates over public policy in Michigan have viewed older Michiganders as a problem rather than an opportunity. And indeed there is a high level of financial insecurity among Michigan’s 50+ population: 69% of Michigan voters age 50 and over report that their income is falling behind the cost of living. Older workers are having difficulty securing good-paying jobs that allow them to save for retirement in the current economy. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the re-employment rate is only 47% for workers age 55-64 and 24% for those over 65, compared with 62% for workers 20-54. Workers in the 55-64 age bracket average 46 weeks to find another job, compared to 20 weeks for younger workers.

For Michiganders 65 and over, Social Security benefits represent approximately 39% of their income, and nearly 23% of married retirees and 46% of unmarried retirees are almost entirely dependent on Social Security for their income. The average Social Security benefit for a retired worker is $15,528 a year, or for married couples about $25,000 per year.

Nevertheless, the aggregate impact of consumer spending by retirees is a significant, positive contributor to Michigan’s economy. Each dollar received by Social Security beneficiaries living in Michigan in turn generates nearly two dollars in spending by individuals and businesses, adding about $55 billion in total economic output to the Michigan economy annually.

Americans over 50 also serve as a resource and safety net for their parents and children. According to a 2011 survey by Ameriprise Financial, approximately 58% of Americans between 47 and 65 provide assistance to their parents, including cooking, cleaning, laundry, personal care, and transportation, as well as financial support for such necessities as groceries (22%), medical bills (15%) and utility bills (14%). The same survey found that over 90% of this group provide some form of financial support to their adult children.
Additional Resources


8 The Role of Nurse Practitioners in Meeting Increasing Demand for Primary Care (Dec 2012). http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-health-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/the-role-of-nurse-practitioners.html


10 Attitudes Among Likely Michigan Voters Age 50+ (Hart/North Star Opinion Research for AARP, June 2014). PowerPoint available upon request.


AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities, and advocates on issues that matter the most to people age 50+ and their families, such as health care, employment and income security, support for family caregivers, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and protection from fraud and financial abuse. AARP has approximately 1.4 million members in Michigan. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates.
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