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January 18, 2011

The Honorable Bob Bethel, Chairman  
Aging and Long-Term Care Committee

Reference – AARP Kansas Priorities

Good morning Chairman Bethel and Members of the House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee. My name is David Wilson and I am the Volunteer State President for AARP Kansas. AARP Kansas has more than 341,000 members statewide. Thank you for allowing us time this morning to present our priorities including home- and community-based services (HCBS).

AARP is working to help Americans 50+ in Kansas live life to the fullest. We advocate for our members on critical priorities, such financial protection, access to affordable utilities, and independence and choice for all Americans as they age.

This year, the issues that AARP Kansas will focus on in its advocacy on behalf of the 50+ population include long term care, home and community based services (HCBS), nursing contact hours, older workers and utilities.

**Long-Term Care:** AARP Kansas's has long supported rebalancing long-term care services in Kansas. Rebalancing would entail reaching a more equitable balance between the proportion of total Medicaid long-term support expenditures used for institutional services and those used for community-based supports. A balanced LTC system offers individuals a reasonable array of ... options, particularly adequate choices of community and institutional options. In 2003, at the request of AARP Kansas, the University of Kansas, Office of Aging and Long-Term Care, completed research "Securing Kansas' Future: Next Steps in Long-Term Care." Findings in the research were:

- Statewide surveys of Kansas's older adult population overwhelmingly indicate their preference to receive long-term care services in the community.
- Kansas continued to institutionalize older adults at rates higher than the national average in all age categories. In 2000, the percent of Kansans age 65 and over residing in nursing facilities was 5.57% while the national average was 4.5%.

In 2008, an AARP Public Policy Institute report on the state of long-term care in Kansas, "A Balancing Act: State Long-Term Care Reform", found that Kansas continues to institutionalize older Kansans at a higher rate than the national average. Compared to the U.S. as a whole, Kansas has a significantly higher rate of older people (age 65+) living in nursing homes - 5.15 nursing home residents for every 100 people age 65+ (6<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation, and 43% higher than the U.S. average).

In a 2009, an AARP Public Policy Institute report, "Profiles of Long-term Care and Independent Living revealed that 66 percent of Kansans receive long-term care services are served in institutional settings versus 33% in home and community based settings.

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The reports also states that:

- The bulk of Medicaid long-term dollars go to nursing home rather than home and community based services.
- On average, Medicaid dollars can support nearly three older people and adults with disabilities in home and community based settings for every person in a nursing facility.

Therefore, AARP Kansas will advocate for budgets and policies to eliminate institutional bias, expand access to HCBS, and allow consumers to choose the setting in which they receive services.

**The Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) Program:** Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the LTCO provides an additional mechanism for ensuring quality and protecting residents' rights. The ombudsmen advocate for residents in nursing homes and supportive housing and investigate and respond to complaints for residents in every state.

However, people of all ages now prefer to receive long-term care services and supports (LTSS) in their own homes whenever possible. Under the "Money Follows the Person Grant", received by Kansas in 2007, many individuals placed in nursing or intermediate care facilities can be served in their homes and communities. Home- and community-based services help to preserve individuals' independence and ties to family and friends at a cost less than that of institutional care.

The individuals ombudsmen have traditionally served - residents of long-term care facilities - are now moving into home care settings. Twelve states currently have Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsmen with HCBS responsibility. The people being served remain the same, but the settings are different. The role of the ombudsman has always been to hold systems accountable to fulfill their responsibilities to residents. In thinking about a potential role for ombudsmen in a long-term care community setting, the role would be the same - to ensure that the systems that are in place adequately provide for consumers.

AARP believes that states should:

- States should provide adequate funding to permit state LTC ombudsmen to visit all facilities.
- Extend the scope of the ombudsman program to include HCBS and ensure that ombudsmen have adequate funding to monitor such services.

**Nursing Hours:** AARP Kansas, along with other partners, will ask legislators to consider increasing the number of nursing care hours that residents of Kansas nursing homes receive each day. We believe that the number should be increased to better meet the care needs of the 18,000 older Kansans who reside in the state's 326 nursing homes. The Institute of Medicine identified positive relationships between nursing staffing and quality of care and reached the conclusion that there is a strong need to increase overall levels of nursing staff in nursing homes. The current standard of required care in Kansas is 2 hours per resident per day. The Institute of Medicine recommends 4.85 hours of nursing care for each resident per day as a minimum standard. In the past year, 132 facilities or 40 percent of all nursing homes in Kansas were cited for abuse, neglect or

exploitation. Studies on staffing and quality of care support the contention that both the level of staffing and mix of staff are directly related to quality of care residents receive.

**Culture Change:** Growing numbers of facilities are embracing culture-change efforts to transform the settings into more pleasant places in which to work and live. For example, the Green House Project and similar efforts transform nursing homes from institutions into small, home-like settings with private rooms and private bathrooms, focusing on resident-centered care and staff empowerment.

AARP believes that states should encourage and provide incentives including, but not limited to, grants and loans for new, affordable models of (LTSS) that emphasize resident-centered care, a home environment, a positive workplace culture, and opportunities for resident involvement in the community.

AARP supports the Greenhouse Projects in Kansas, bringing Dr Bill Thomas to the state to promote the Greenhouse concept. We are troubled to learn through the Hutchinson News report of 6/1/10 that these houses are now being used for short-term rehabilitation therapy and care rather than their intended purpose of providing a home-like setting for those who need skilled care in place of an institutional setting.

**50 + Workers:** 50+ workers have been especially hard hit in the economic downturn. Older workers not only are enduring record-high levels of unemployment, but also stay jobless longer than others, according to the Labor Department. Many struggle with unemployment, underemployment and lack of training for available jobs. An economic recovery is unlikely to quickly restore the jobs lost by older workers -- and some might never return. AARP Kansas will propose legislation that would place mentors at employment centers around the state to specifically focus on the needs of older workers and to help they find the information and resources they need to obtain jobs or reduce the barriers that might keep them from finding jobs.

**Utilities:** The issue of utility costs and energy conservation, especially for older Kansans living on fixed incomes, has long been a concern for AARP Kansas and will continue to be monitored. AARP Kansas will continue to work on behalf of all Kansans to ensure that the cost of utilities is not beyond their reach and doesn't force them to choose between paying for food, rent or medical services.

Once again we thank you for your time this morning and for the opportunity to speak to you regarding our interests in issues that affect older Kansans.

Respectfully,  
David Wilson

Attachments: AARP Kansas Fact Sheet  
AARP Job Search Flyer  
AARP Drivers Safety Program Fact Sheet  
AARP Tax-Aide Fact Sheet



## AARP Kansas State Office

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### Volunteer Contacts

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**AARP Kansas works for over 341,000 members in the state, as well as for all Kansas seniors.**

<b>KS Congressional District</b>	<b>Preliminary Estimated 2010 Population Aged 50+</b>	<b>Estimated AARP Members</b>
CD 1	226,875	87,319
CD 2	224,336	84,666
CD 3	222,994	86,770
CD 4	220,048	80,815

*Source: AARP Insight, 2010.*

We advocate for legislation to protect services and options available to seniors, and we educate members and the community on issues that are important to seniors and all Kansans.

AARP Kansas operates with 5 staff, an all-volunteer Executive Council comprised of seven members, who under the guidance of the State President and the State Director carry out AARP's strategic priorities within the state.

AARP Kansas also benefits from the guidance of a Diversity Advisory Council of twelve volunteers. This Council assists in facilitating cultural change, with an emphasis on inclusion in recruitment, retention, and recognition of AARP Kansas volunteers and members.

We work with an essential cadre of volunteers across the state who are instrumental in helping us to reach our goals of educating and serving Kansans.



## AARP STATE FACT SHEET KANSAS

AARP is working to help Americans 50+ in Kansas live life to the fullest. We advocate for our members on critical priorities, such as strengthening Social Security, protecting seniors' access to their doctors, and ensuring all Americans have independence and choice as they age.

AARP serves as a one-stop resource for information on the age 50+ population in Kansas and public opinion research. In addition to serving as a clearinghouse for information about older Americans, we also offer programs and tools that help Americans age 50+ make the best decisions about their health and financial security. We hope the data below and the programs on the reverse side will be helpful to you and your constituents.

### **Kansas at a Glance**

#### **AARP Members**

Total number of AARP members in Kansas: 341,339

#### **50+ Voters**

78% of Kansas residents 50+ voted in the last election

#### **Employment Profile**

50+ Employed Workers (Labor Participation): 53.9%

50+ Unemployed Workers: 4.5%

#### **Social Security**

Social Security Beneficiaries: 478,138

Retirees: 314,968

Widow(er)s: 40,996

Disabled Workers: 65,631

Social Security recipients who rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income: 20.8%

Social Security recipients who rely on Social Security for 50% or more of their income: 50%

#### **Medicare**

Medicare Beneficiaries: 429,952

#### **Long-Term Care**

Percent in home and community-based services (HCBS): 33%

Percent in nursing homes: 66%

Estimated number of family caregivers: 410,000

Unpaid contributions of family caregivers are valued at: \$2.7 billion

#### **Retirement Security**

Percent of non-government workers (55-64 years old) without workplace retirement benefit: 36%

### **Contact Information**

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# AARP STATE FACT SHEET

## KANSAS

### **AARP: Helping Americans 50+ Live Their Best Lives**

AARP is working to ensure Americans have 50+ choice, control and independence through every stage of their lives.

#### **Finding A Job**

AARP is helping older workers find jobs through our online job board. This tool allows users to search among more than 1 million job listings. The jobs are searchable by state and zip code, as well as part-time and full-time status and specific company and further broken down by industry, occupation and title. The job board can be found at <http://jobs.aarp.org>.

#### **Preparing For Your Retirement**

AARP is helping Americans prepare for retirement by providing a retirement calculator that will allow them to answer key questions: Am I saving enough? When can I afford to stop working? How long will my money last? The calculator can be found at [www.aarp.org/retirementcalculator](http://www.aarp.org/retirementcalculator).

#### **Affording And Understanding Your Prescriptions**

AARP's guide, **Medicines Made Easy**, shows consumers how to safely and effectively manage their medications. They'll learn the right questions to ask health care professionals; the importance of tracking medications; and how to compare drugs for effectiveness and cost. A personal medication record to complete and share at doctor and pharmacy visits is included and can be downloaded from AARP's web page: [www.aarp.org/medicationrecord](http://www.aarp.org/medicationrecord).

AARP's **Doughnut Hole Calculator** is a four-step online tool to help people with Medicare Part D save money. This powerful tool calculates when a person with Medicare Part D insurance will fall into the prescription drug coverage gap, or "doughnut hole" and directs users to lower cost, therapeutically similar drugs available in their Part D plan. Using the tool, consumers may be able to reduce their time in the coverage gap or possibly avoid it altogether. Go to [www.aarp.org/doughnuthole](http://www.aarp.org/doughnuthole).

AARP's **Drug Savings Tool** helps consumers better understand their prescription drug choices. The new, three-step tool allows users to select the drug they want to compare from Consumer Reports Health's database of about 500 drugs in 26 drug classes. The tool then provides consumers with recommendations on their drug options based on the medications' safety, effectiveness, cost and convenience. Users are also provided with a discussion sheet to help guide conversations with their health care professional. Go to: [www.aarp.org/drugsavings](http://www.aarp.org/drugsavings).

#### **Preserving Your Independence And Choices**

**Decide.Create.Share<sup>SM</sup>** is AARP's national campaign dedicated to increasing awareness among boomer women about long-term care planning. The campaign website offers timely, relevant news on long-term care, interactive tools and information tailored to women interested in planning for their long-term care, including glossaries, polls, and an online community for women who are considering their options and planning for their future. Go to [www.aarp.org/decide](http://www.aarp.org/decide).

#### **Driving Safely As You Age**

Even though older drivers are generally safe drivers, cars have changed. So have traffic rules, driving conditions, and the roads we drive on every day. Older drivers can sharpen their driving skills and refresh their knowledge of the rules of the road by taking the **AARP Driver Safety Program** classroom or online course. To learn more visit [www.aarp.org/drive](http://www.aarp.org/drive) or call 1-888-AARP NOW (1-888-227-7669). Also available is the **Getting Around Guide** ([www.aarp.org/gettingaround](http://www.aarp.org/gettingaround)) for those who no longer drive or are interested in going "car-lite."

http://www.aarp.org/work/

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Search for millions of jobs with the new AARP Job Search Engine.

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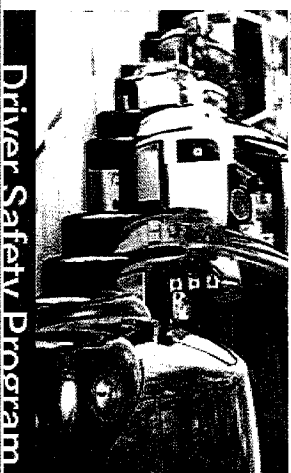


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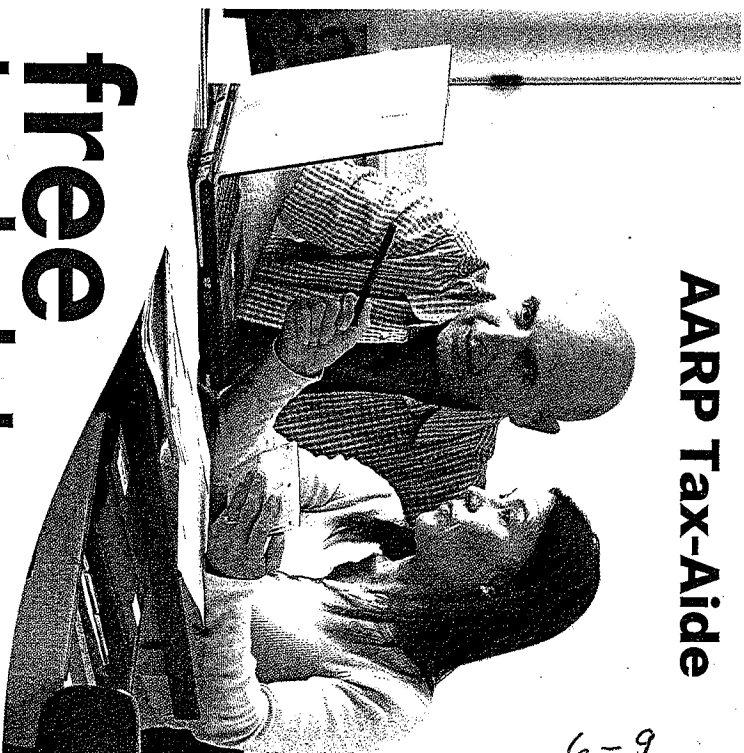
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For taxpayers with low- and middle-income, with special attention to those age 60 and older.

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- a free, quality service supported by friendly people in your neighborhood
- a confidential service
- a service that prepares tax returns and answers tax questions
- over 32,000 dedicated and proud IRS-certified volunteers
- available for assistance at nearly 7,000 sites nationwide late January/early February through April 15

To locate a site near you, visit our website at [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide) or call our toll-free number, 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669) from late January/early February through April 15. For year-round assistance, visit [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide).

**AARP**<sup>SM</sup>

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