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**AARP New York  
Election Survey:  
Prescription Drugs**

***Executive Summary for  
State Senate District 7***

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January 2007



**AARP New York Election Survey:  
Prescription Drugs**  
*Executive Summary for State Senate District 7*

**Prepared by Katherine Bridges**

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## **Acknowledgements**

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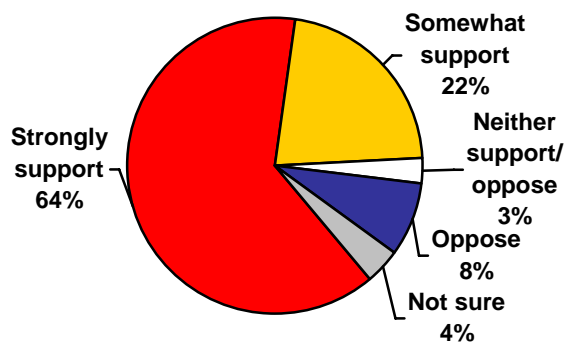
## Executive Summary

Prescription drug affordability is increasingly on the minds of Americans as the prices for prescriptions continue to rise faster than the rate of inflation. A recent AARP study found that manufacturer prices for the 200 most commonly used brand name prescriptions by older adults rose an average of 6.3 percent last year—more than one and a half times the rate of inflation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in a national election issue poll conducted by AARP last fall, two-thirds of baby boomers and older adults reported that paying for prescription drugs is a financial problem for them, and three-quarters said the cost of prescription drugs would be an important factor in deciding who to vote for in the November 2006 elections.<sup>2</sup>

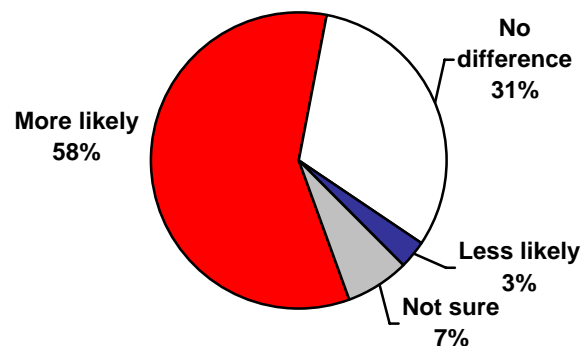
In New York, the sentiment seems to be the same. Most (76%) residents age 50 and older in SD-07 are currently taking prescription medicine on a daily basis. Three-quarters of residents age 50 and older in this district (73%) say they are concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs over the next two years, and about one in twelve—or about 8,900 residents 50 and older<sup>3</sup>—say they have delayed getting a prescription filled because they did not have money to pay for it. As such, seven in ten (72%) respondents think it is very important that their elected officials make it a priority to make prescription drugs more affordable; however, the majority (57%) does not think New York State has done enough to keep prescription drugs affordable and accessible to all New Yorkers.

When asked about legislation to allow the State to purchase prescriptions in bulk and therefore pass these savings onto uninsured or under-insured New Yorkers, the majority of respondents supports the proposal and says they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports this proposal.

**Support for Bulk Buying Legislation  
(N=400)**



**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Supports Bulk Buying Legislation  
(N=400)**



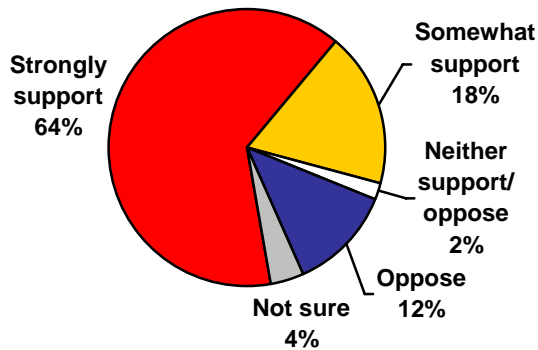
<sup>1</sup>*Trends in Manufacturer Prices of Prescription Drugs Used by Older Americans* (2006). AARP Public Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.aarp.org/research/health/drugs/aresearch-import-869-2004-06--IB69.html>

<sup>2</sup> *AARP Election Watch: Pulse of a Generation*. (2006). AARP Knowledge Management. Retrieved from [http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/rx\\_pulse\\_2006.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/rx_pulse_2006.pdf)

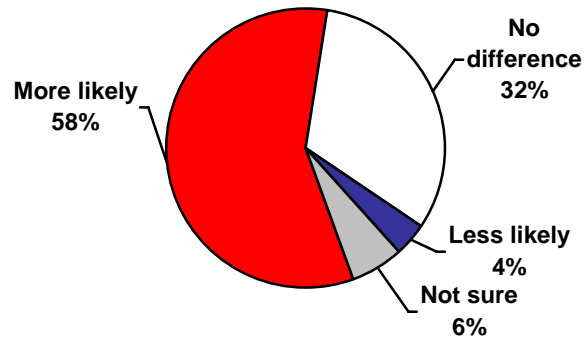
<sup>3</sup> Senate district population estimates were computed by AARP aggregating block group estimates developed by Claritas, Inc.

When asked about legislation that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on marketing drugs to physicians, two-thirds of respondents say they would strongly support the Legislature enacting such a law, and more than half say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who support this proposal.

**Support for Legislation Requiring Drug Manufacturers to Report Amounts Spent on Marketing to Physicians (N=400)**

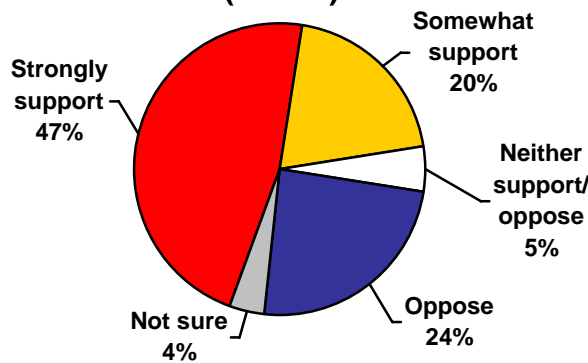


**Likelihood of Voting for Candidate Who Supports Legislation for Drug Manufacturer Reporting (N=400)**



Further, more than two-thirds of residents age 50 and older in SD-07 say they would support the State of New York enacting legislation that would prevent information about doctors' prescribing patterns from being sold to drug companies for marketing purposes that could influence which drugs doctors prescribe.

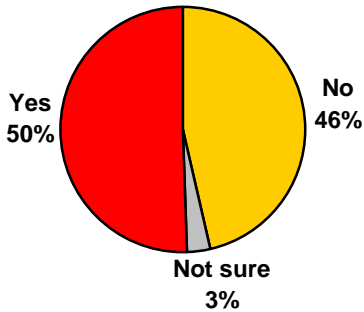
**Support for Legislation Preventing Doctors' Prescribing Information from Being Sold to Drug Manufacturers (N=400)**



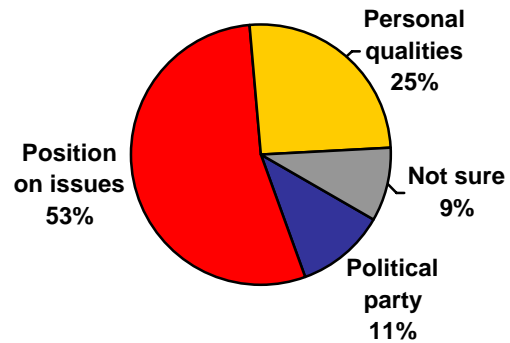
The pharmaceutical industry has always had a strong presence at the State Legislature. The industry says they need to have this strong presence to positively influence prescription drug policy in New York State. Critics say the pharmaceutical industry has a negative influence, which has prevented lower costs of prescriptions. Through this survey, we find that about half (47%) of residents in SD-07 age 50 or older believe that the pharmaceutical industry has a negative influence on the development of New York State's prescription drug policy. At the time of the survey, three-quarters of respondents said they were very likely to vote in the February 6 Special Election, but only half had decided who they would be voting for in

the election. When deciding for whom to vote, over half say a candidate's position on one or two key issues matters the most to them—more so than the personal qualities of the candidate or a candidate's political party.

**Whether Respondents Have Decided on Candidate They Will Vote for in Special Election (N=400)**



**Most Important Factor Respondents Consider When Deciding on Candidates (N=400)**



Prescription drug affordability has been a central goal for AARP New York for several years. Last year, the two legislative proposals tested in this survey overwhelmingly passed with bi-partisan support in the New York State Assembly, but were not passed by the State Senate. Since prescription drug affordability is also an issue of great concern to its constituents, AARP commissioned this survey to assess the opinions of older adults on the issue as well as these legislative proposals for reducing prescription costs in the State. Woelfel Research, Inc. completed approximately four hundred telephone interviews, between January 19 and January 23, 2007, with randomly selected (RDD) residents age 50 and older in New York State Senate District 07 who are registered to vote. The margin of error for surveys is +/- 4.8%. An annotated questionnaire is appended to this summary.

# 2007 New York Election Survey: Prescription Drugs

State Senate District 07 Annotated Questionnaire

N=400; Margin of Error =  $\pm$  4.8%

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from Woelfel Research, a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on some important issues in New York. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. The survey should take about 5 minutes of your time.

S1. Are you between the ages of 18 and 49, 50 and 64, or are you age 65 or older?

- 1 UNDER 18 [ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE 50 OR OLDER]
- 2 18-49 [ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE 50 OR OLDER]
- 3 50-64 [CONTINUE]
- 4 65 OR OLDER [CONTINUE]

IF NO ONE OVER 50, THANK AND TERMINATE

S2. Are you registered to vote in New York ?

- 1 YES [CONTINUE]
- 2 NO [ASK TO SPEAK TO REGISTERED VOTER]
- 3 DK/REFUSED [ASK TO SPEAK TO REGISTERED VOTER]

IF NO REGISTERED VOTER, THAN AND TERMINATE

ASK S3 IF ZIP CODE NOT WHOLLY CONTAINED IN THE SENATE DISTRICT

S3. Was Mike Balboni the State Senator for your district?

1. YES [QUALIFIES]
2. No [TERMINATE]
3. Don't know [CONTINUE]

S4. Is a special election scheduled for your district on February 6 to elect a new State Senator?

1. YES [QUALIFIES]
2. No [TERMINATE]
3. Don't know [TERMINATE]

## Main Questionnaire

### 1. How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years?

<u>%</u>	
44	Very concerned
29	Somewhat concerned
17	Not very concerned
10	Not at all concerned
1	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
0	Refused (DO NOT READ)

### 2. Are you currently taking prescription medication on a daily basis?

<u>%</u>	
76	Yes
24	No
0	Not sure (VOLUNTEERED)
<.5	Refused

### 3. How do you pay for your prescription drugs when you need them? Do you....

	<u>Yes</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Not Sure</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Refused</u> <u>%</u>
a. Pay full retail price, without any discount or insurance coverage .....	10	90	1	0
b. Have insurance through an employer or your spouse's employer that pays all or part of the cost ...	51	48	1	0
c. Have insurance through your former employer or your spouse's former employer that pays all or part of the cost .....	29	71	1	0
d. Have a prescription drug discount card from a pharmaceutical company or pharmacy.....	20	79	1	0
e. Have coverage through a state sponsored program such as EPIC or Medicaid.....	13	86	1	0
f. Have coverage through a Medicare Part D plan	22	75	4	0
g. Have coverage through the Veterans Administration.....	7	92	1	<.5
h. Do you have some other type of coverage not already mention? .....	18	81	1	<.5

**4. Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs. In the past 12 months, have you or a family member done any of the following?**

**REPEAT AS NEEDED: In the past 12 months, have you or a family member...**

	<u>Yes</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Not Sure</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Refused</u> <u>%</u>
a. Delayed getting a prescription filled or not gotten a prescription filled because you didn't have enough money to pay for it? .....	8	92	0	0
b. Taken less medicine than your doctor prescribed to make it last longer? .....	11	89	<.5	0
c. Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or Internet from a company <b>in the U.S.</b> because they cost less?.....	23	76	1	0
d. Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or Internet from a company <b>in another country</b> because they cost less .....	4	96	0	0
e. Traveled to Canada to purchase prescription drugs because they cost less?.....	1	100	0	0

**5. How strongly do you agree or disagree that New York State has done enough to keep prescription drugs affordable and accessible to all New Yorkers? Would you say you...**

<u>%</u>	
7	Strongly agree
21	Somewhat agree
4	Neither agree nor disagree (VOL)
24	Somewhat disagree
33	Strongly disagree
11	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**6. How important is to you that your elected officials make it a priority to make prescription drugs more affordable? Would you say it is...**

<u>%</u>	
72	Very important
20	Somewhat important
4	Not very important
2	Not at all important
2	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
<.5	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**7. A Bill has been introduced in the New York State Legislature that would establish a bulk purchasing program for prescription drugs. This bill would allow New York to establish a buying pool for its state programs and to include in this buying pool individuals who lack adequate prescription drug coverage, such as those in the Medicare Part D doughnut hole.**

[IF NEEDED: The Medicare Part D doughnut hole is a gap in the Medicare Part D insurance plans where people have to pay the full retail price of drugs once their insurer has paid \$2,250 in prescription costs on their behalf in a given year.]

**How strongly would you support or oppose legislation that would allow the state to do “bulk purchasing” and pass the savings to people without adequate drug coverage?**

<u>%</u>	
64	Strongly support
22	Somewhat support
3	Neither support or oppose (VOL)
4	Somewhat oppose
4	Strongly oppose
4	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
<.5	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**8. If a candidate for state office supported the State of New York purchasing prescription drugs in bulk and using the savings to lower the cost of prescription drugs for those who lack adequate coverage, such as those in the Medicare Part D doughnut hole, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make a difference in how you vote?**

<u>%</u>	
58	More likely
3	Less likely
31	Would not make a difference
7	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**9. Drug manufacturers market expensive new drugs to physicians. Sales representatives from these companies may provide physicians with free meals, trips, entertainment, and other gifts. Some experts believe that these practices encourage physicians to prescribe newer, more expensive drugs when equally effective and less costly drugs exist. Other experts believe such practices encourage the use of new, more effective drugs.**

**How strongly would you support or oppose the New York Legislature enacting a law that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on these marketing practices?**

<u>%</u>	
64	Strongly support
18	Somewhat support
2	Neither support nor oppose (VOL)
5	Somewhat oppose
7	Strongly oppose
4	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**10. If a candidate for state office supported the New York Legislature enacting a law that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on marketing drugs, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make a difference in how you vote?**

<u>%</u>	
58	More likely
4	Less likely
32	Would not make a difference
6	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**11. Drug companies buy information that tracks the drugs that are being prescribed by doctors. This information includes the name of the drug, and the name and address of the doctor prescribing the drug, but not the patient's identity. With this information, drug companies can target their marketing efforts to get doctors to prescribe their drugs over less expensive, equally effective drugs.**

**How strongly would you support or oppose the State of New York enacting legislation that would prevent this type of information from being sold to drug companies for the purpose of influencing which drugs doctors prescribe?**

<u>%</u>	
47	Strongly support
20	Somewhat support
5	Neither support nor oppose (VOL)
9	Somewhat oppose
15	Strongly oppose
4	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**12. The pharmaceutical industry has always had a strong presence at the State Legislature. The industry says they need to have this strong presence to positively influence prescription drug policy in New York State. Critics say the pharmaceutical industry has a negative influence, which has prevented lower costs of prescription drugs.**

**Do you believe that the pharmaceutical industry has a POSITIVE influence on the development of New York State's prescription drug policy, a NEGATIVE influence, or is their influence JUST ABOUT RIGHT?**

<u>%</u>	
15	Positive influence
47	Negative influence
17	Just about right
19	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
2	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**13. How often would you say you vote? Is it ...[READ]**

<u>%</u>	
74	Always
20	Nearly Always
4	Some of the time
2	Seldom
1	Never
1	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
0	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**14. How likely are you to vote in the Special Election to replace Senator Balboni on February 6th?**

<u>%</u>	
74	Very Likely
16	Somewhat Likely
2	Not Very Likely (SKIP TO Q16)
5	Not At All Likely (SKIP TO Q16)
5	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
1	Refused (DO NOT READ)

**15. Have you already decided for whom to vote in this Special Election? [SKIP IF Q15=3 or 4] (n=377)**

<u>%</u>	
50	Yes
46	No
3	Not sure (VOLUNTEERED)
1	Refused

**16. Which of the following matters most when you vote for a candidate for a state office... [READ] (ROTATE)**

<u>%</u>	
11	The candidate's political party
53	The candidate's position on one or two key issues
25	The personal qualities of the candidate
9	Not sure (DO NOT READ)
2	Refused (DO NOT READ)

Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions about you.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### D1. Record Gender

<u>%</u>	
34	Male
66	Female

### D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

<u>%</u>	Age
33	50-59
34	60-74
25	75+
9	Refused

### D3. What is your current marital status?

<u>%</u>	
60	Married
4	Not married, living with partner
22	Widowed
1	Divorced
6	Separated
5	Never married
2	Refused

### D4. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

<u>%</u>	
3	0-12 <sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)
24	High school graduate or equivalent
13	Post high school education (no degree)
10	2 year college degree
18	4 year college degree
7	Post-graduate study (no degree)
23	Graduate or professional degree
2	Refused

### D5. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

<u>%</u>	
4	Self employed part-time
7	Self employed full-time
10	Employed part-time
23	Employed full-time
47	Retired, not working at all
6	Not in labor force for other reasons
1	Unemployed but looking for work
2	Refused

**D6. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?**

<u>%</u>	
2	Yes
95	No
<.5	Don't know
2	Refused

**D7. What is your race?**

<u>%</u>	
86	White or Caucasian
5	Black or African American
1	American Indian or Alaskan Native
3	Asian
0	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
3	Other
0	Don't know
4	Refused

**D8. For statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to your household income level, before taxes, for 2005:**

<u>%</u>	
3	Less than \$10,000
5	\$10,000 to less than \$20,000
8	\$20,000 to less than \$35,000
8	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000
5	\$50,000 to less than \$60,000
9	\$60,000 to less than \$75,000
31	\$75,000 and above
5	Don't know
26	Refused

## **AARP**

### **Knowledge Management**

**For more information, please contact Katherine Bridges at  
207.899.2094 or [kbridges@aarp.org](mailto:kbridges@aarp.org)**