

**2007-2008 AARP Key
Legislative Priorities:
A Survey of Likely Voters
in North Carolina**

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2007-2008 AARP Key Legislative Priorities: A Survey of Likely Voters in North Carolina

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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. 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.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Legislation is pending in the North Carolina Assembly on issues important to AARP. AARP conducted a poll to see what voters think about six of AARP North Carolina's priority legislative goals in the 2007-08 North Carolina General Assembly.

- **Long-Term Care Rating System** – Long-term care advocates in North Carolina have long supported a rating system of adult care homes in the state. Legislation to develop the rating system by the NC Medical Care Commission is pending in the state legislature. Nearly eight in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor the creation of a rating system for adult care homes.
- **Separate Housing of Mentally Ill from Older Adults** – Mixed populations of younger mentally ill patients with frail older adults in the same adult care homes often creates situations that are not good for either the younger adults or the older residents in the homes. Seven in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor additional state taxpayer funding so that older adults and persons with mental illnesses can be housed in separate care homes.
- **Mental Health Parity** – North Carolina is one of the remaining states that does not require group health insurers to cover mental health services as they cover physical illness. Research in other states shows that providing mental health parity does not increase overall health care cost. Two in three likely voters in North Carolina say they favor a law that would require companies that offer group health insurance to cover the treatment of mental illness.
- **Hospital Reporting of Patient Care Data** – Consumers should be able to access information about patient care that informs them of a hospital's performance related to medical errors, infection rates, and medication errors. Over eight in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor making this information available to the public.
- **Long-Term Care Insurance Premium Tax Credit** – North Carolina provided taxpayers with a tax credit for the purchase of long-term care insurance from 1999 to 2003. Nearly seven in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor the re-enactment of this law.

- **Home and Community Care Block Grant Program** – This program funds services that allow older adults to remain in their home and community – services such as home-delivered meals, adult day care, respite care, and in-home aide services. Additional funding for this program would provide more North Carolinians with options that permit them to remain in their homes instead of requiring them to be admitted to adult care homes or nursing homes for care. Three in four likely voters in North Carolina favor additional state taxpayer funding for this program.

Methodology. The poll was conducted on March 22 and March 23, 2007 by a method known as Interactive Voice Response (IVR). Simply put, a ten-question survey was recorded and then sent by telephone to households in North Carolina. Our respondents were randomly selected voters from the North Carolina Voter File who had a history of voting in general elections during the last three years. Once these voters answered their telephones, a recorded message was heard urging them to answer this survey. These voters then answered by pressing buttons on their telephone keypad. The following results have a sampling error of ± 3.9 percent.¹

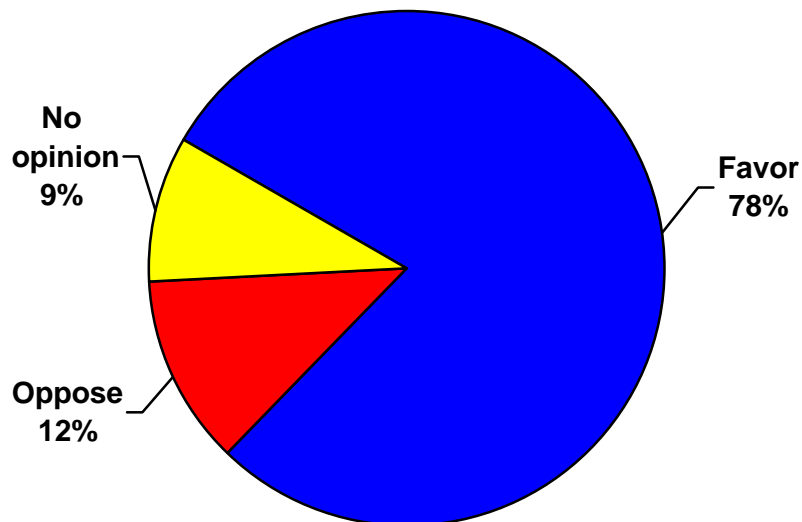
¹ The response rate is 4.5 percent and the cooperation rate is 7.3 percent. The response rate is Response Rate 3 and the cooperation rate is Cooperation Rate 3 (AAPOR, 2004). The data were weighted by gender, race, and political party affiliation.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Adult Care Homes

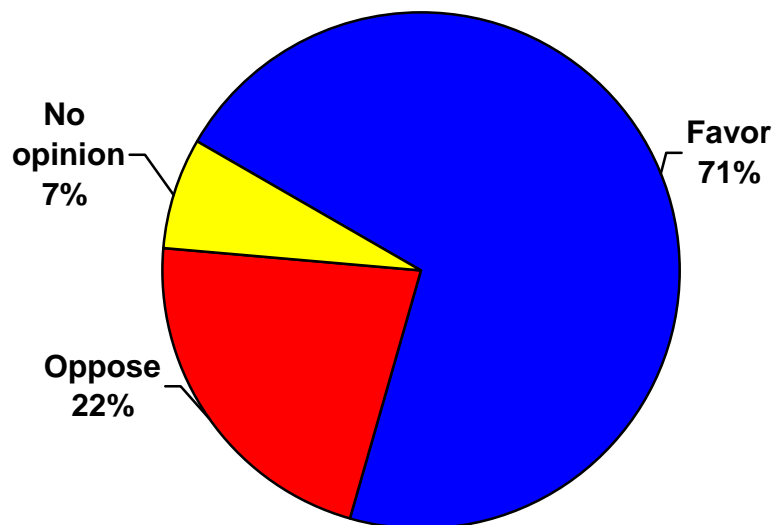
Adult care homes, also called rest homes, provide care and assistance to older adults and also to persons with disabilities who need supervision and help with activities of daily living. **Nearly eight in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor the creation of a rating system for adult care homes.** Such a system would allow the public to learn how well each adult care home met certain quality requirements. Support for such a system is shared by likely voters who consider themselves as Democrats (78%) as well as by those who consider themselves as Republicans (79%).

**Likely Voters' Support for the
Development of a Rating System for Adult
Care Homes**
(n=626)



Currently, many young people with mental illnesses live in the same adult care home as frail older adults. **Seven in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor additional state taxpayer funding so that older adults and persons with mental illnesses can be housed in separate care homes.** While likely voters who consider themselves as Democrats are more likely to favor additional taxpayer funding, the majorities of likely voters in both political parties favor additional taxpayer funding (Democrats 80%; Republicans 59%).

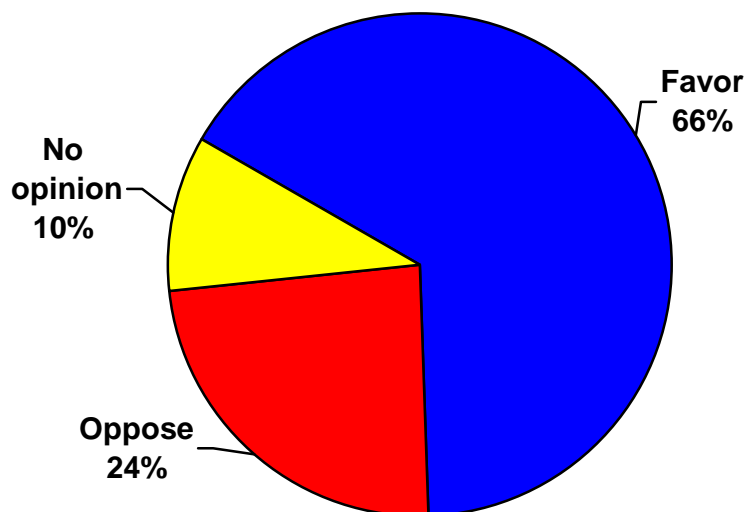
Likely Voters' Support for Additional Taxpayer Funding for Separate Care Homes for Older Adults and Persons with Mental Illnesses
(n=626)



Mental Health Insurance

Currently in North Carolina, companies who offer group health insurance are not required to offer coverage for mental health services. **Two in three likely voters in North Carolina say they favor a law that would require companies that offer group health insurance to cover the treatment of mental illness.** The majorities of likely voters who consider themselves as Democrats (71%) and Republicans (59%) also favor such a law, although those voters who consider themselves as Democrats are more likely to support it.

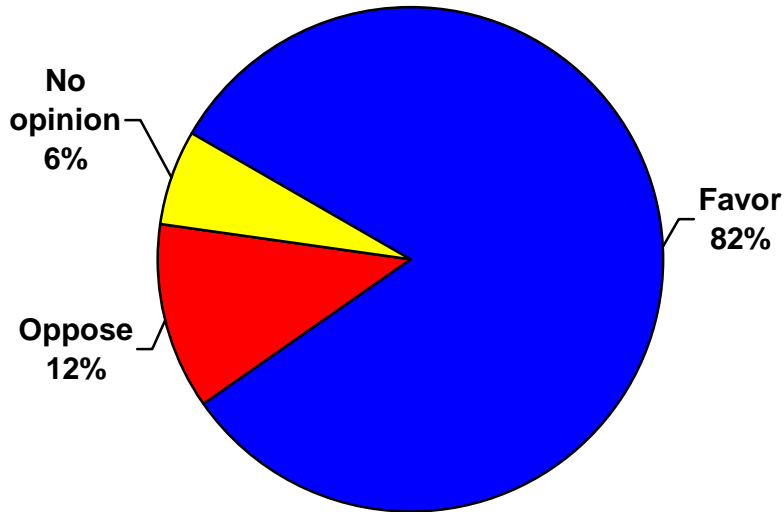
**Likely Voters' Support for a Law to Require
Group Health Insurance Companies to Cover
Mental Health Illnesses**
(n=626)



Disclosure of Hospital Errors

Currently in North Carolina, hospitals are not required to report information such as infection rates and medical or medication errors to the public. **Over eight in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor making this information available to the public.** The majorities of likely voters who consider themselves as Democrats (82%) and Republicans (79%) favor making such information available.

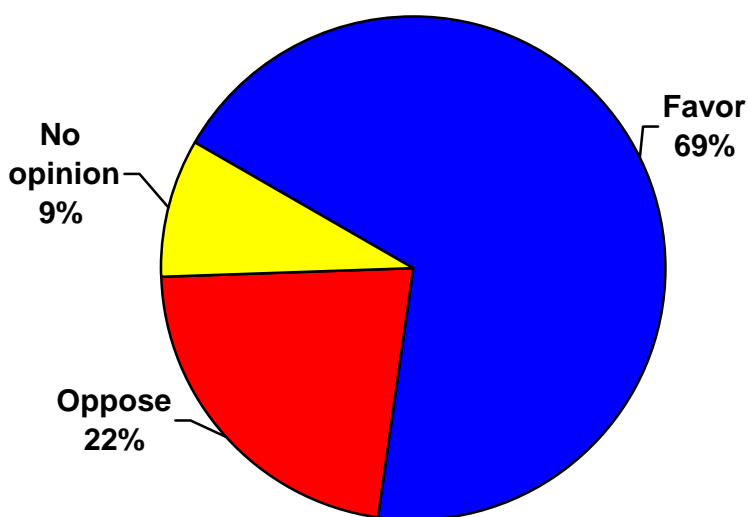
Likely Voters' Support for Making Hospital Errors Available to the Public
(n=626)



Long-Term Care Insurance Tax Credit

From 1999 through 2003, a law existed in North Carolina that provided a tax credit of up to \$350 to individuals who purchased private long-term care insurance policies. **Nearly seven in ten likely voters in North Carolina favor the re-enactment of this law.** The majorities of likely voters who consider themselves as Democrats (65%) and Republicans (72%) favor a re-enactment of this law.

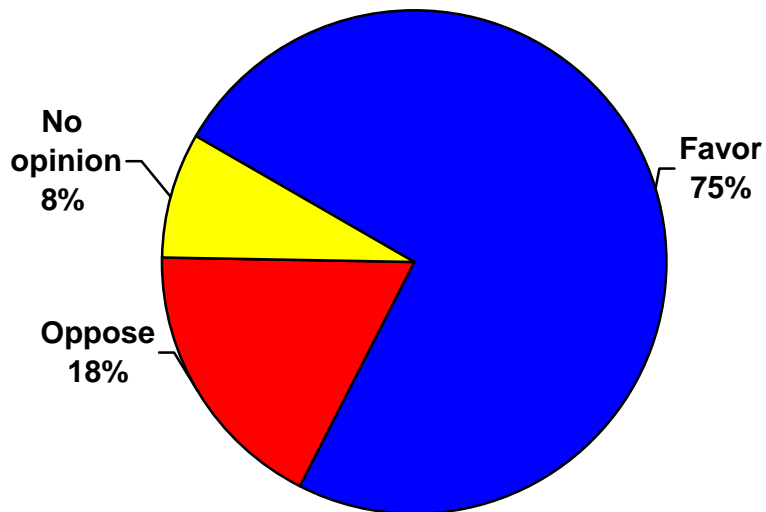
Likely Voters' Support of Re-enacting a Law to Provide Tax Credits for Individuals Who Purchase Private Long-Term Care Insurance
(n=626)



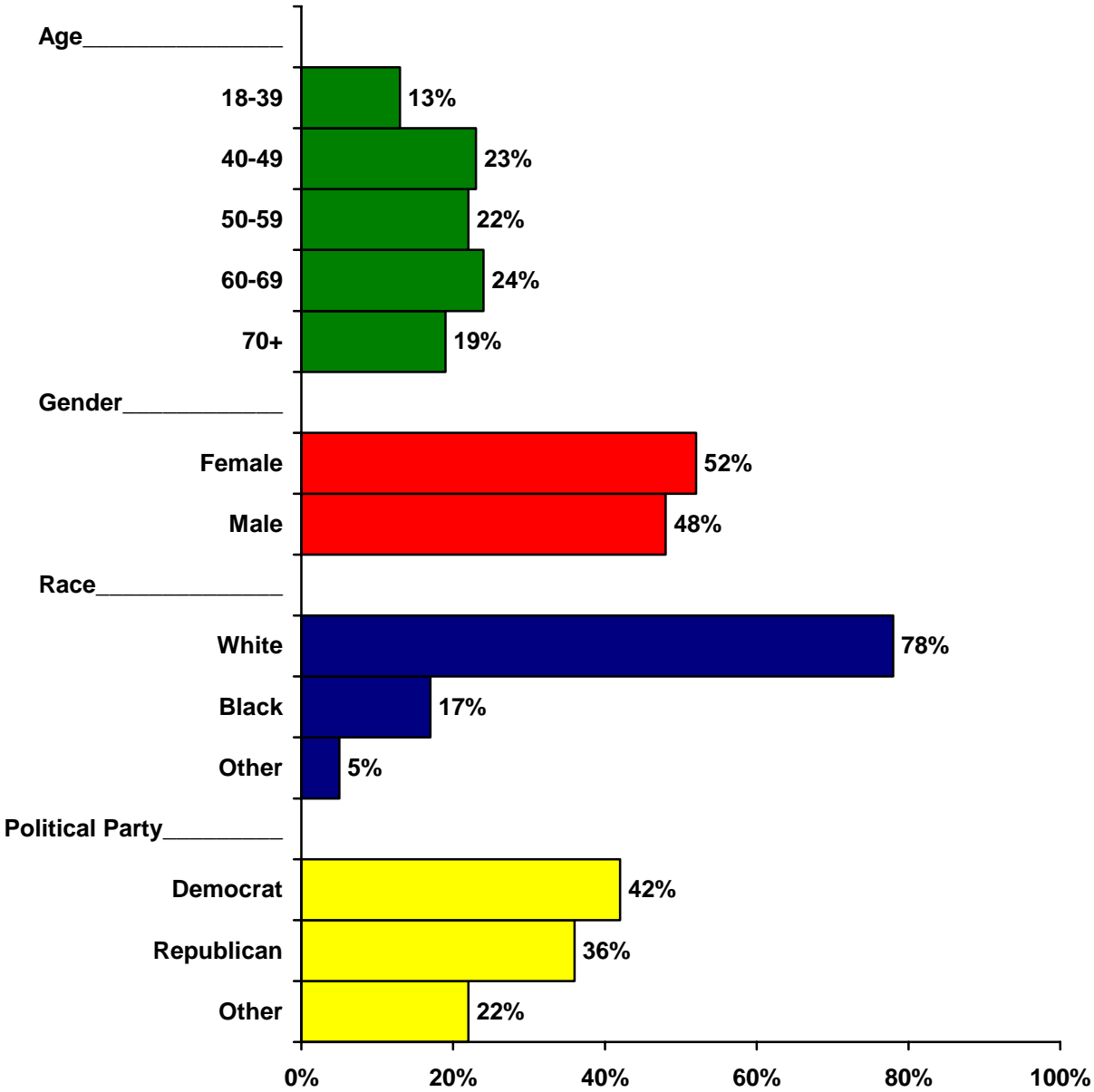
Home and Community Care Block Grant

North Carolina helps fund a program called the Home and Community Care Block Grant, along with the federal government. This program provides services such as home-delivered meals, in-home aide services, adult day care services, among many others. Currently there are over 11,000 people in North Carolina on a waiting list for these services. **Three in four likely voters in North Carolina favor additional state taxpayer funding for this program.** While likely voters who identify themselves as Democrats are more likely to favor additional funding for this program (87%), the majority of voters who identify themselves as Republicans also support additional funding (64%).

Likely Voters' Support of Additional State Taxpayer Funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant
(n=626)



Demographic Profile of Likely Voters (n=626)



APPENDIX A
Annotated Questionnaire

AARP NC Survey Results

Q1 Some people want North Carolina legislators to create a rating system for adult care homes. These homes, also called rest homes, provide care and assistance to older adults and to persons with disabilities who need supervision and help with activities of daily living. With such a rating system, the public could learn how well each adult care home met certain quality measures. Many adult care home operators argue that collecting such information would increase their costs of care. Would you favor or oppose such a rating system for adult care homes? If you favor having homes rated for quality by the state, press 1 on your keypad now. If you oppose a rating system, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 78% *No opinion*..... 9%
Oppose 12%

Q2 Under current law, many young people with mental illness live in the same adult care homes as frail older adults. This often creates a situation that is not good for either the younger adults or the older residents of the homes. Would you favor or oppose additional state taxpayer funding so that older adults and mentally ill persons can be housed separately? If you favor more state funding for this, press 1 now. If you oppose additional funding, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 71% *No opinion*..... 7%
Oppose 22%

Q3 Right now, group health insurance companies in North Carolina are not required to cover mental health services. Some people propose requiring health insurance companies to cover services for mental illness the same as they do for physical illness, but others oppose this because additional benefits usually increase the cost of insurance. Would you favor or oppose a law to require health insurance companies to cover the treatment of mental illness? If you want to require group health insurance to cover mental health services, press 1 now. If you oppose putting this requirement on group health insurance companies, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 66% *No opinion*..... 10%
Oppose 24%

Q4 Some consumer groups want hospitals to publicly report information such as infection rates, medical errors, and medication errors so that the public can be better informed about the quality of care in hospitals. Would you favor or oppose making this information available to the public? If you favor requiring hospitals to report this information, press 1 now. If you oppose, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 82% *No opinion*..... 6%
Oppose 12%

Q5 From 1999 to 2003, North Carolina had a law that provided a tax credit of up to \$350 for individuals who purchased private long-term care insurance policies. Some say that the credit helped people plan for their own long-term care needs and reduced the need for Medicaid, the government health program for low-income individuals. Would you favor or oppose re-enacting this law to create a tax credit for individuals who buy long-term care insurance? If you favor this tax credit, press 1 now. If you oppose the tax credit, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 69% *No opinion*..... 9%
Oppose 22%

Q6 North Carolina helps fund a program called the Home and Community Care Block Grant, along with the federal government. This program provides services such as home-delivered meals, in-home aide services, adult day care services, and many other services, that assist older adults. At this time, more than 11,000 people in North Carolina are on a waiting list for these services. Would you favor or oppose additional state taxpayer funding for this program? If you favor more state funding for this, press 1 now. If you oppose additional funding, press 2. If you have no opinion, press 3.

Favor..... 75% *No opinion*..... 8%
Oppose 18%

Q7 If you are a woman, press 1, if a man, press 2.

Women52% *Men*.....48%

Q8 If you are a Democrat, press 1. A Republican, press 2. If other, press 3.

Democrat.....42% *Other*.....22%
Republican.....36%

Q9 If you are white, press one now. If you are African-American, press two now. If other, press 3.

White78% *Other*..... 5%
Black.....17%

Q10 Age

18-19..... 1% *60-69*.....24%
20-29..... 5% *70-79*.....14%
30-39..... 7% *80-89*..... 5%
40-49.....23% *90-99*..... 0%
50-59.....22%

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