A solid green rectangular block is positioned in the top left corner of the page.A small yellow square is located at the bottom right corner of the green block.Thin black lines extend from the bottom right corner of the green block, one horizontally and one vertically.

2001 AARP New Jersey Legislative Issues Survey

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2001 AARP New Jersey Legislative Issues Survey

**Data Tabulation by FGI, Inc.
Report Prepared by Susan L. Silberman, Ph.D.**

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AARP is the nation's leading organization for people age 50 and older. It serves their needs and interests through information and education, advocacy, and community services, which are provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country. The organization also offers members a wide range of special benefits and services, including *Modern Maturity* and *My Generation* magazines and the monthly *Bulletin*. Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.

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New Jersey Legislative Issues Survey

Background

The 2001 AARP New Jersey Legislative Issues Survey examines the opinions of AARP members in New Jersey in three broad policy areas: long-term care, consumer protection, and affordable housing. New Jersey has approximately 1.3 million AARP members.

Methodology

The 2001 AARP New Jersey Legislative Issues Survey is a mail survey conducted in July and August 2001. A random sample of 2000 AARP members in New Jersey was selected from AARP's Insight© database. New Jersey members returned 1088 surveys, for a response rate of 54 percent, by the cut-off date. In order to obtain a representative sample, reflecting the survey respondents in New Jersey who are 50 and older, the data were weighted. Weighting ensures the correct age segmentation distribution among the respondents. The survey has a sampling error of ± 3 percent.

This report summarizes findings on respondents' priorities and support for the three policy areas addressed in the survey. The results are reported as percentages.

Highlights

New Jersey members believe that long-term care (92%), consumer protection (90%), and affordable housing (85%) should be *top* or *high priorities* for New Jersey.

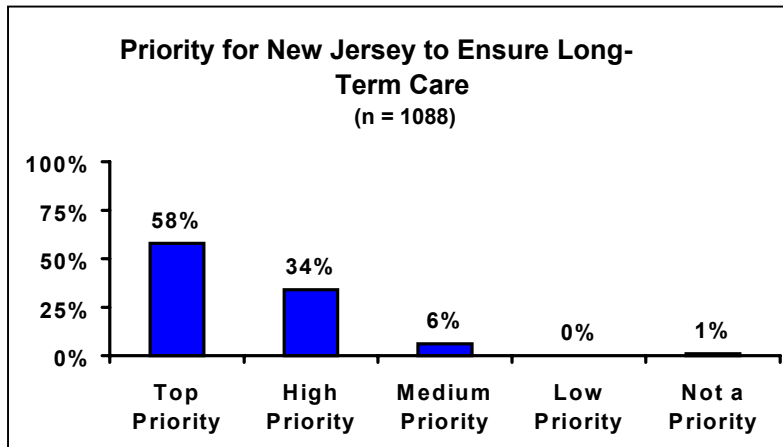
Over nine in ten New Jersey members support a variety of specific initiatives to strengthen long-term care, consumer protection and affordable housing in the state.

- 98% support laws to improve nursing home quality
- 96% favor funding for programs to expand home and community based care
- 98% support strengthening laws related to telemarketing fraud
- 97% support protection of homeowners from unfair and deceptive lending practices
- 91% support reestablishing the New Jersey Department of Public Advocate

Members report these issues would affect their voting behavior: At least seven in ten New Jersey members would be more likely to vote for candidates who supported legislation in these areas.

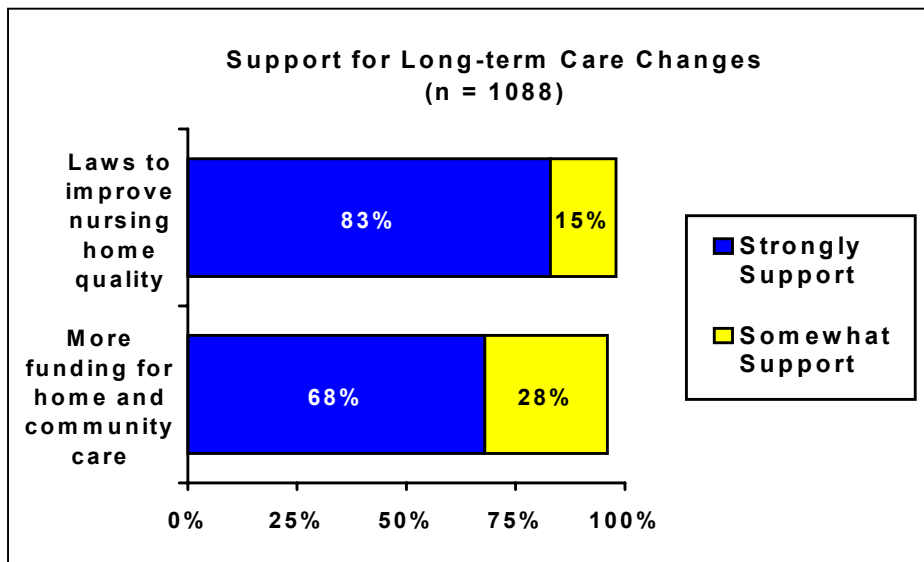
Findings

Long-Term Care Issues



Long-term care is a priority issue for AARP members in New Jersey. More than nine in ten respondents think it should be a *top* (58%) or *high priority* (34%) to ensure high quality, affordable long-term care choices for residents.

AARP members strongly support specific enhancements to the long-term care system. Ninety-eight percent of respondents *strongly* (83%) or *somewhat support* (15%) new state laws to improve the quality of nursing homes.



Similarly, ninety-six percent of respondents favor additional funding for programs that expand home care and community-access options and allow older people to remain in their

own homes, even if it means redirecting state resources. Specifically, 68% of respondents *strongly support* additional home and community care programs, while 28% of respondents *somewhat support* more programs.

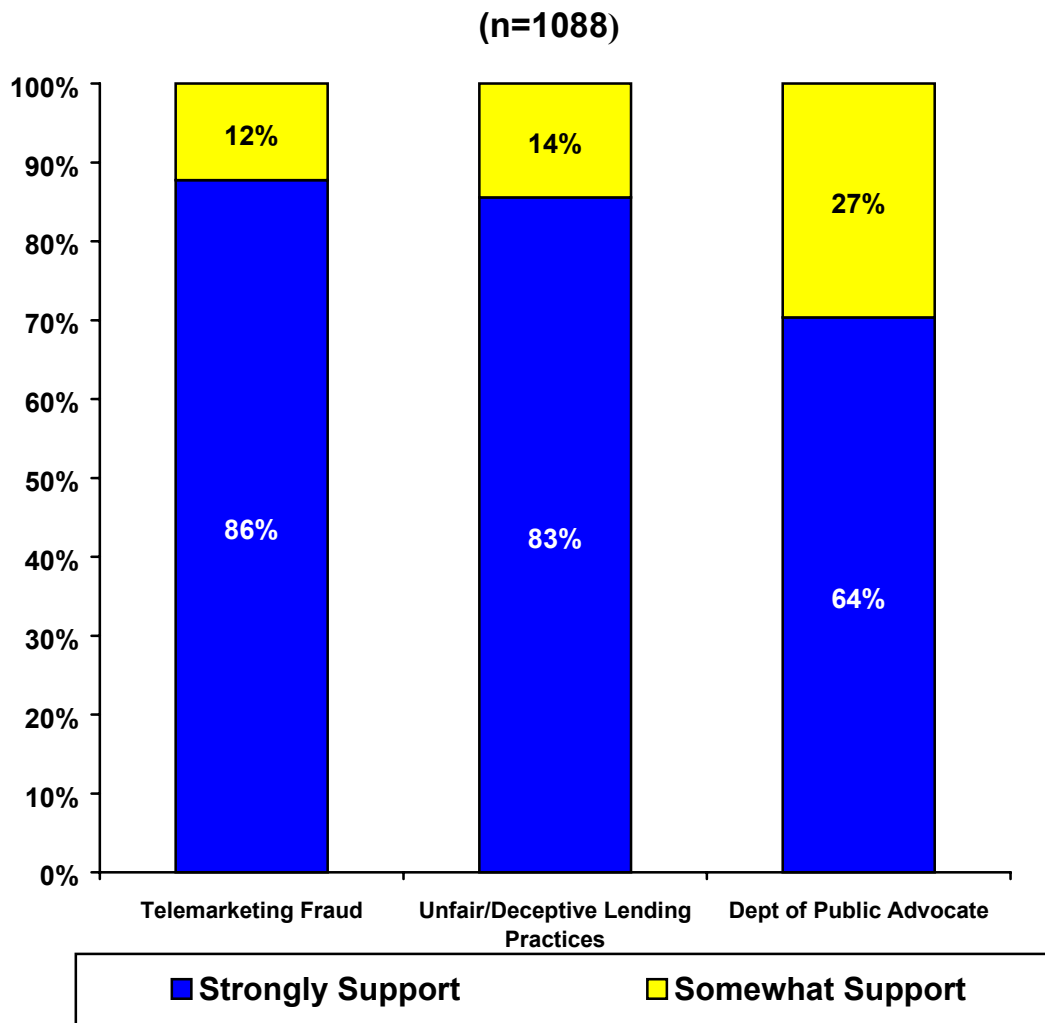
The depth of support for long-term care issues among New Jersey members carries over to their voting behavior. Eighty-five percent of survey respondents say they are *more likely* to vote for a candidate who favors affordable long-term care choices.

Consumer Protection

Nine in ten (90%) AARP members believe New Jersey should make strengthening laws and regulations protecting consumers from fraud and other unfair business practices either a *top* (58%) or a *high priority* (32%).

When asked to focus on specific measures, survey respondents overwhelmingly favor a variety of legislative initiatives designed to protect consumers.

Support for Specific Consumer Protection Measures



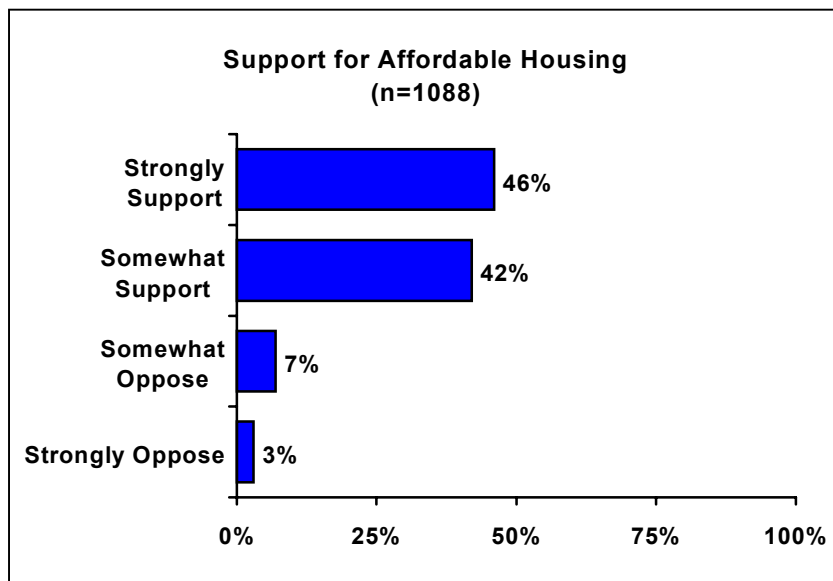
More than nine in ten (98%) respondents *strongly support* or *somewhat support* legislation strengthening laws and regulations that protect consumers from telemarketing fraud. Ninety-seven percent of New Jersey members *strongly support* or *somewhat support* legislation to strengthen laws and regulations that will protect homeowners from unfair and deceptive lending practices. Survey respondents demonstrate similar levels of agreement (91%) for legislation to reestablish the New Jersey Department of Public Advocate. Overall, survey results indicate

New Jersey members are committed to strong consumer protection regulation.

Over eight in ten (84%) AARP members in New Jersey report they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports legislation to strengthen laws and regulations that protect consumers from fraud and other unfair business practices.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing issues are also important to New Jersey members. More than eight in ten AARP members in New Jersey think it should be a *top* (47%) or *high priority* (38%) to ensure safe, affordable and accessible housing for older residents. This strong response may reflect increasing concern about the economy.



Support for affordable housing carries over to how New Jersey members view housing assistance programs. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents favor increasing housing assistance programs for older residents, even if it means redirecting state resources. Specifically, 46% of

respondents *strongly support* additional housing programs, while 42% of respondents *somewhat support* more programs.

A Profile of New Jersey Respondents

One thousand and eighty-eight AARP members in New Jersey completed the survey. The respondents are almost evenly split between men (50%) and women (48%). The majority of the respondents is Caucasian (87%), married (57%), and has at least some college education (49%). While some respondents are still active in the work force (35%), the majority are retired (54%). Almost six in ten respondents (59%) have incomes above \$30,000.

With regard to political activity, in the past five years, 42% of New Jersey respondents have phoned, faxed, or written a public official on matters of concern to them. Twenty-five percent of responding members have

contributed money to a candidate or political party in the same time period. Eighty-three percent of respondents have voted in nearly all (65%) or most (17%) of the state elections held in the last ten years.

Conclusions

New Jersey members are politically engaged people with strong opinions on the legislative issues surveyed. They overwhelmingly support long-term care matters including nursing home quality and expanded care choices. On questions of consumer protection, respondents endorse legislation that would take a more activist stance on telemarketing, public advocacy, and lending practices. New Jersey members are also concerned about affordable housing and favor additional assistance programs in this area. Importantly, respondents indicate they will support state office candidates who favor legislation that will increase and strengthen long-term care, consumer protection and affordable housing programs.

Appendix
Annotated Questionnaire

2001 AARP NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE ISSUES SURVEY

AARP MEMBERS = 1,088, RESPONSE RATE = 54% SAMPLING ERROR = +/- 3%

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. A “*” means less than 1%)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. New Jersey is one of the most expensive places in the nation to live. How much of a priority should it be for New Jersey to ensure that safe, affordable, and accessible housing is available to older residents?

47% Top Priority
38% High Priority
12% Medium Priority
1% Low Priority
1% Not A Priority
1% No Response

2. New Jersey provides housing assistance for low-income and older residents. The programs include rental assistance for eligible households and financial aid for housing construction and rehabilitation.

Would you support or oppose increasing state housing assistance programs for older New Jersey residents, even if it means redirecting state resources?

46% Strongly Support
42% Somewhat Support
7% Somewhat Oppose
3% Strongly Oppose
2% No Response

3. If a candidate for state office in New Jersey supported legislation to increase the availability of safe, affordable, and accessible housing for older residents, how likely would you be to vote for that candidate?

71% More Likely
25% Would Not Make a Difference
3% Less Likely
2% No Response

CONSUMER PROTECTION

4. How much of a priority should it be for New Jersey to strengthen laws and regulations that protect consumers from fraud and other unfair business practices?

58% Top Priority
32% High Priority
8% Medium Priority
1% Low Priority
1% Not A Priority
1% No Response

5. The New Jersey Department of Public Advocate was disbanded in 1994. As an independent state agency, the Department of Public Advocate represented the interests of consumers on a variety of issues including advocacy for low- and moderate-income seniors and the disabled. Additionally, the Department of Public Advocate opposed utility rate increases, enforced laws on consumer fraud, and worked to improve conditions in state mental hospitals and institutions for the retarded.

Would you support or oppose legislation to reestablish the New Jersey Department of Public Advocate?

64% Strongly Support
27% Somewhat Support
5% Somewhat Oppose
2% Strongly Oppose
2% No Response

6. Would you support or oppose legislation to strengthen laws and regulations that specifically protect consumers from telemarketing fraud?

86% Strongly Support
12% Somewhat Support
1% Somewhat Oppose
* Strongly Oppose
1% No Response

7. Would you support or oppose legislation to strengthen laws and regulations that will protect homeowners in New Jersey from unfair and deceptive lending practices?

- 83% Strongly Support
- 14% Somewhat Support
- 1% Somewhat Oppose
- * Strongly Oppose
- 1% No Response

8. If a candidate for state office in New Jersey supported legislation that strengthens laws and regulations that protect consumers from fraud and other unfair business practices, how likely would you be to vote for that candidate?

- 84% More Likely
- 14% Would Not Make a Difference
- 1% Less Likely
- 1% No Response

LONG-TERM CARE

9. Long-term care refers to help for people who are frail, ill or disabled, and who need assistance with regular daily activities, such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating.

How much of a priority should it be for New Jersey to ensure that older persons and persons with disabilities have high quality, affordable long-term care choices in nursing homes, in the community, and in their own homes?

- 58% Top Priority
- 34% High Priority
- 6% Medium Priority
- * Low Priority
- 1% Not A Priority
- 1% No Response

10. Would you support or oppose additional funding for programs that expand home care and community-access options and allow older people to remain in their own homes, even if it means redirecting state resources?

- 68% Strongly Support
- 28% Somewhat Support
- 2% Somewhat Oppose
- 1% Strongly Oppose
- 1% No Response

11. Would you support or oppose new state laws to improve the quality of nursing homes?

- 83% Strongly Support
- 15% Somewhat Support
- 1% Somewhat Oppose
- * Strongly Oppose
- 1% No Response

12. If a candidate for state office in New Jersey supported legislation to ensure that older persons and persons with disabilities have high quality, affordable long-term care choices in nursing homes, in the community, and in their own homes, how likely would you be to vote for that candidate?

- 85% More Likely
- 13% Would Not Make a Difference
- 1% Less Likely
- 2% No Response

ABOUT YOU

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

13. Which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you have voted in NEARLY ALL, MOST, SOME, or A FEW of the State elections (that is elections for New Jersey Governor and Legislators) held in the last ten years?

65%	Nearly all
17%	Most
10%	Some
5%	A few
3%	No Response

14. Which of the following political activities have you participated in the last five years?

a. Phoned, faxed, or written a public official to make your views known on an issue of concern of you?

42% Yes	56% No	2% No Response
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b. Contributed money to a candidate or political party?

25% Yes	73% No	2% No Response
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15. Please indicate whether you are:

50% Male	48% Female	3% No Response
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16. My age is: _____ years old

28%	50-59
41%	60-74
27%	75+
5%	No Response

17. What is your current marital status? (Please check one.)

- 57% Married or living as married
- 24% Widowed
- 9% Divorced
- 1% Separated
- 5% Never married
- 3% No Response

18. What is the highest grade or years of schooling that you have completed? (Please check one.)

- 9% Some high school
- 29% High school graduate
- 3% Vocational or technical program
- 19% Some college or a 2 year degree
- 17% College graduate (4 years)
- 14% Post-graduate degree
- 9% No Response

19. What is your current employment status? (Please check one.)

- 29% Employed or self-employed **full-time**
- 6% Employed or self-employed **part-time**
- 54% Retired
- 4% Homemaker
- 2% Unemployed, looking for work
- 1% Unemployed, not looking for work
- 5% No Response

20. What race do you consider yourself? (Please check one.)

- 87% White/Caucasian
- 6% Black/African American
- 1% Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1% Native American/American Indian, Alaskan Native
- 1% Some other race
- 4% No Response

21. Are you Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino?

- 2% Yes
- 89% No
- 10% No Response

22. What is your 5-digit zip code? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

23. What was your total pre-tax household income from all sources in 2000?
(Check only one.)

- 4% Less than \$10,000
- 12% \$10,000 to \$19,999
- 13% \$20,000 to \$29,999
- 10% \$30,000 to \$39,999
- 12% \$40,000 to \$49,999
- 14% \$50,000 to \$74,999
- 23% \$75,000 or more
- 12% No Response

*Thank you for participating in this survey.
Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed envelope
by **August 20, 2001**.*

*If you misplace the return envelope, send to:
State Member Research -- NJ Legislative Issues Survey
AARP
601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049*

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information, contact Susan L. Silberman at (202) 434-6339.