

A large green square is positioned in the top left corner of the page. A smaller yellow square is located at the bottom right corner of this green square. A thin black line extends from the right side of the yellow square, and another thin black line extends from the bottom side of the yellow square, forming a crosshair that intersects at the yellow square's corner.

# **AARP Vermont Election Survey: Member Views on National & State Issues**

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October 2006



# **AARP Vermont Election Survey: Member Views on National & State Issues**

**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 our 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**

AARP staff from the Vermont State Office and Knowledge Management contributed to the design and implementation of this study. Special thanks go to AARP staff including Greg Marchildon, Philene Taormina, Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, and David Reville, Vermont State Office; Rachelle Cummins, Darlene Matthews, and Jennifer Leslie, Knowledge Management; and Michael Schuster, General Counsel. FGI Research assisted with data preparation and analysis on behalf of AARP. Katherine Bridges, AARP Knowledge Management, managed all aspects of the project and wrote the report. For more information, contact Katherine Bridges at (202) 434-6329.

## Background

AARP Vermont commissioned this study of members in the State to assess their opinions on issues of importance to individuals age 50 and older which are framing debates in 2006 elections. While some of the issues explored in the survey, such as health care and Medicare, are more pertinent to national campaigns, others with more state and local implications were also included to help inform policy discussions during the elections and beyond.

This mail survey was conducted with a randomly selected sample of 2,000 AARP Vermont members between July 26 and August 23, 2006. Of those surveyed, 1,048 returned completed questionnaires by the survey end date, yielding a response rate of 52 percent. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.0 percent. Responses to each of the questions included in the survey can be found at the end of this report.

## Survey Highlights

- More than eight in ten Vermont members (81%) agree that major health care reform should be enacted.
- More than eight in ten respondents (83%) think the federal government should see that everyone has at least a minimum health benefit.
- Nine in ten members (90%) agree that Medicare should be allowed to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower drug prices, and seven in ten members (71%) say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who also supported this proposal.
- Three-quarters (76%) of Vermont members agree that Medicare should be expanded to cover long-term care, such as nursing homes and home care.
- Most Vermont members feel it is extremely important to have services that would enable them to stay at home as long as possible if they needed long-term care (65%), and would be more likely to vote for candidates for state office who supported initiatives to make this happen (81%).
- Eight in ten respondents (81%) believe that more should be done to develop affordable senior housing, and most (66%) would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports legislation to ensure there is adequate affordable housing for older adults.
- Seven in ten Vermont members (73%) think it is important that Vermont increase its funding for public transportation programs, particularly those serving the elderly and persons with disabilities, and the majority (66%) would be more likely to vote for state office candidates if they supported expansion of funding for these programs.
- Nearly seven in ten respondents (68%) say they support the Vermont legislature creating and funding a state program that helps make electricity affordable to households with low incomes, and most of these respondents (65%) would still support such a program, even if everyone had to pay \$1.25 each month to pay for it.

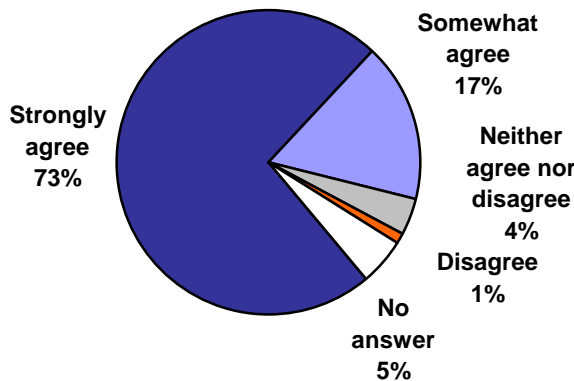
## DETAILED FINDINGS

### National Issues: Medicare

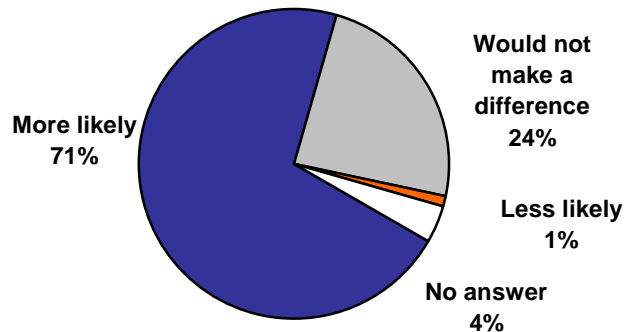
**Nine in ten members agree that Medicare should be allowed to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower drug prices, and seven in ten members say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who also supported this proposal.**

When asked how strongly they agree or disagree that Medicare should be allowed to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs, AARP Vermont members overwhelmingly say they agree. Through a companion question, members further show their support for this Medicare proposal by stating they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress or the U.S. Senate if that candidate also supported allowing Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

**Agree or Disagree: “Medicare should be allowed to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs.”**  
(N=1,048)



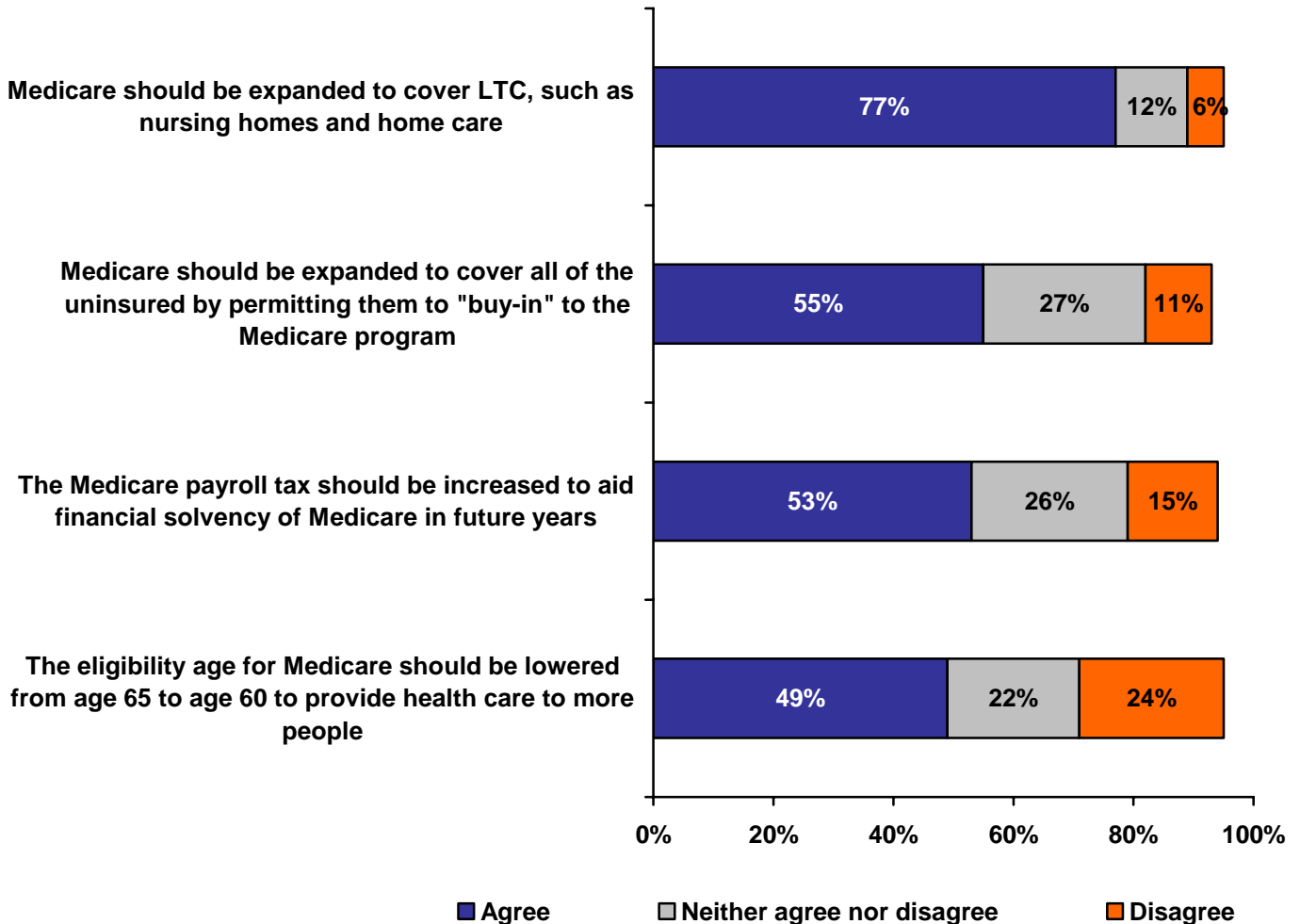
**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate who Supports Allowing Medicare to Use Its Bargaining Power to Negotiate Lower Prices for Prescription Drugs**  
(N=1,048)



**More than three-quarters of Vermont members agree that Medicare should be expanded to cover long-term care, such as nursing homes and home care.**

In the survey, respondents were presented with a list of statements about Medicare reform proposals and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement. As noted earlier, nine in ten agree with Medicare negotiating for lower drug prices. In addition, nearly eight in ten Vermont members either strongly or somewhat agree that Medicare should be expanded to cover long-term care, such as nursing homes and home care. Fewer, but still at least half of members in Vermont agree that the uninsured should be able to buy-in to the Medicare program, and that the payroll tax should be increased to aid the financial solvency of the program. There was greatest disagreement with the proposal to lower the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 60 as a means of providing health coverage to more people.

**Agree or Disagree: Statements on Medicare Reform Proposals**  
(N=1,048)

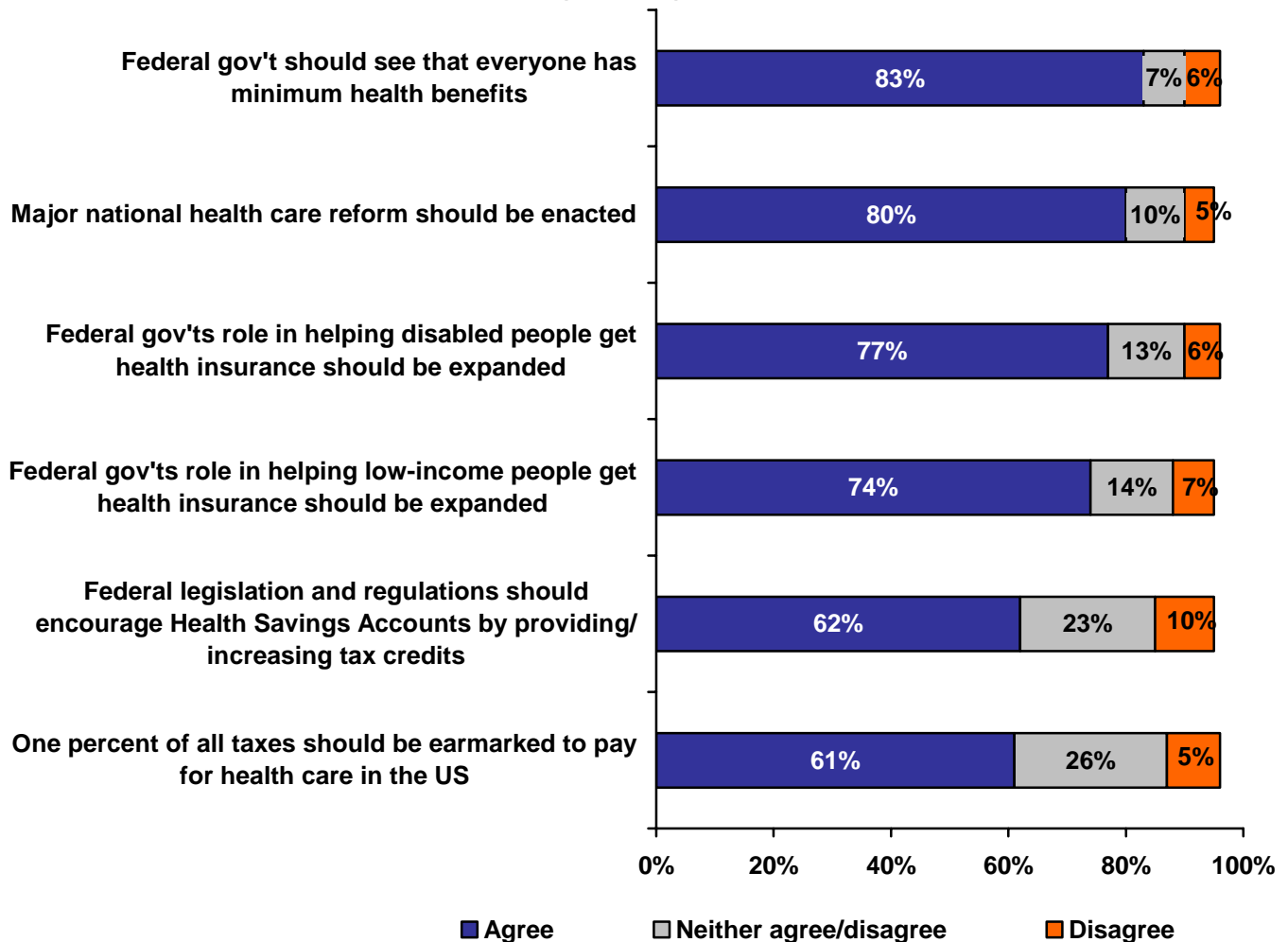


## National Issues: Health Care

**More than eight in ten Vermont members agree that major health care reform should be enacted, and that the federal government should see that everyone has at least a minimum health benefit.**

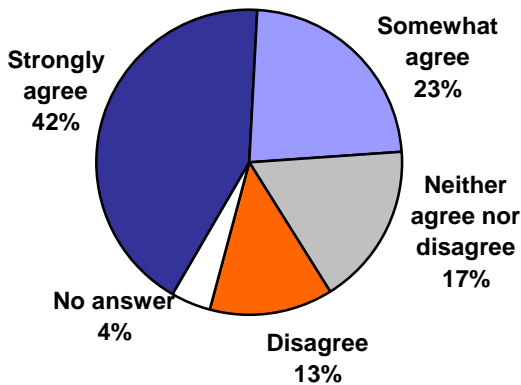
Likewise with a list of statements about health care reform, survey respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. More than eight in ten members either strongly or somewhat agreed that major national health care reform should be enacted and that the federal government should see that everyone has at least a minimum health benefit. About three-quarters of respondents believe that the federal government's role in helping people with disabilities and those with low-incomes get health coverage should be expanded. Fewer members agreed with statements that proposed solutions to national health reform, such as encouraging health savings accounts through tax credits and earmarking one percent of all taxes to pay for health care.

**Agree or Disagree: Statements on National Health Care**  
(N=1,048)

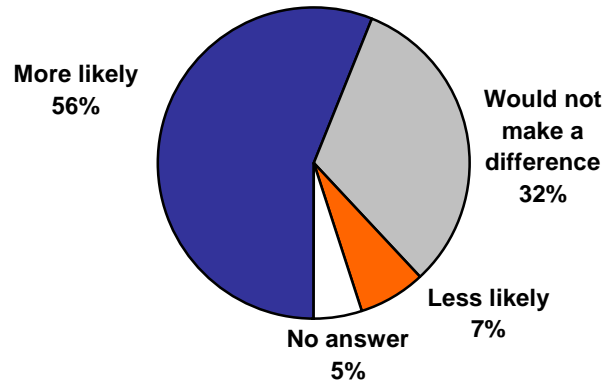


Another statement that proposed a solution for national health care reform included in the list met with similar results: about two-thirds of members say they agree that the federal government, employers, and individuals should all contribute to pay for health care coverage for everyone. With its companion election question, nearly six in ten respondents say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports such a combined responsibility solution to national health care reform.

**Agree or Disagree:**  
**“The federal government, employers, and individuals all should contribute to pay for health care coverage for everyone.”**  
 (N=1,048)



**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Supports the Federal Government, Employers, and Individuals All Contributing to Pay for Health Care Coverage for Everyone**  
 (N=1,048)



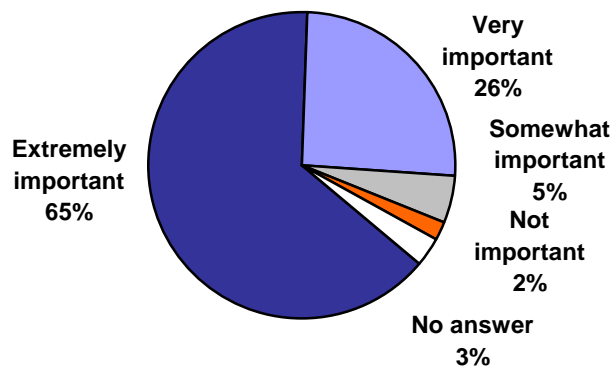
### State Issues: Long-Term Care

**It is extremely important for most Vermont members to have services that would enable them to stay at home as long as possible if they need long-term care, and they believe the State should do more to increase the quality and availability of such services.**

Long-term care refers to care provided over an extended period of time. People of all ages who are frail, ill, or disabled and need assistance with activities such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating, may receive long-term care. This care can be provided at home, in a community setting, such as assisted living, or in a nursing home.

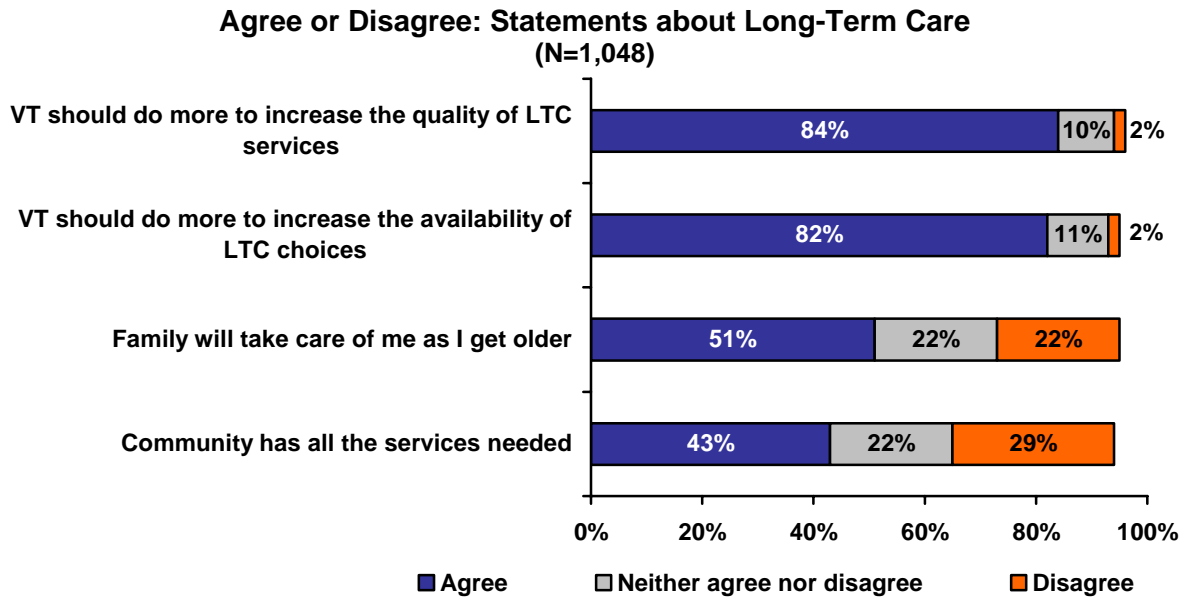
If long-term care services were needed for an AARP member or for someone in their family, nine out of ten say it would be extremely or very important to have services that would help them stay at home as long as possible.

**Importance of Staying at Home as Long as Possible if Long-Term Care is Needed**  
 (N=1,048)



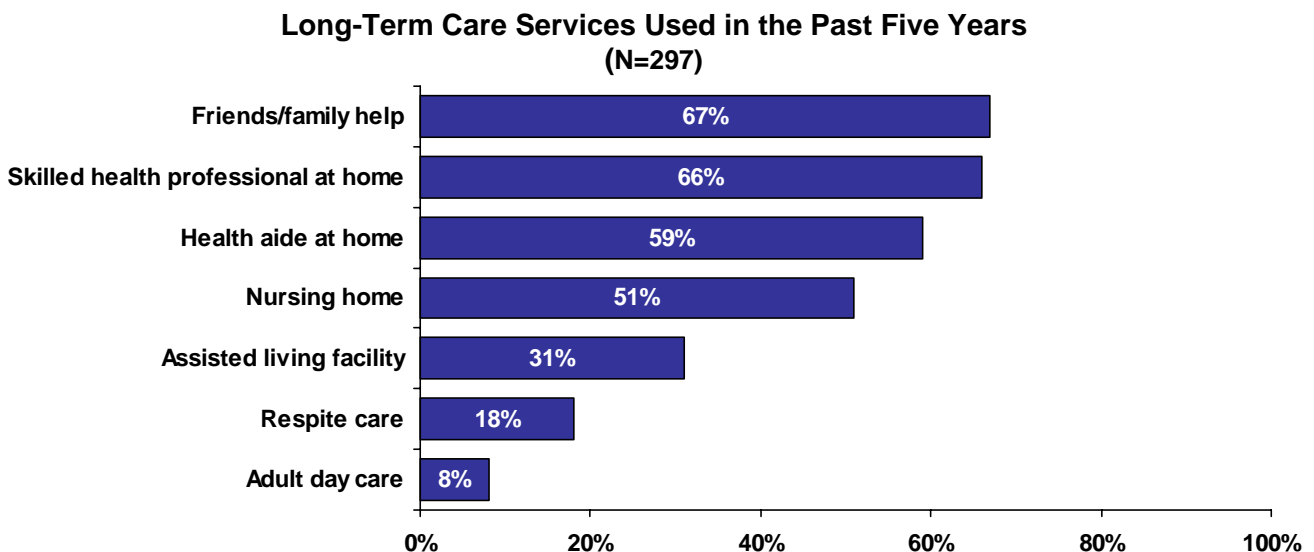


Despite the importance placed on remaining at home as long as possible, a significant number of members do not think their community has all the services they will need as they get older, and only half think the members of their family will help take care of them when they get older. As such, more than eight in ten agree that Vermont should do more on long-term care, either increasing the quality of services or increasing the availability of care choices.



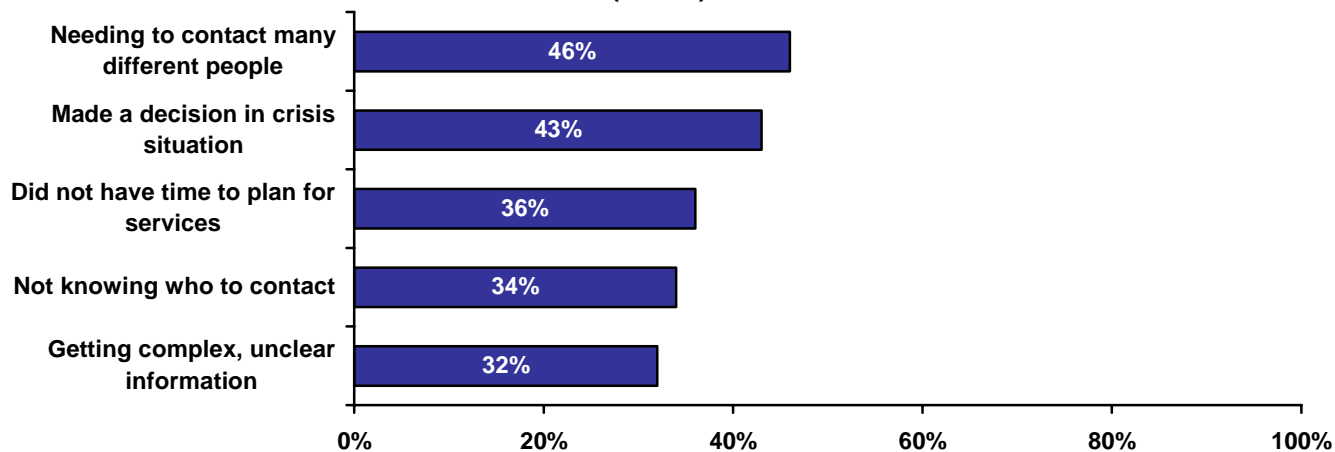
**While only about three in ten members have used long-term care in the past 5 years, many of these individuals faced problems when the need for care arose.**

In the past five years, nearly three in ten members or a family member (28%) has needed long-term care services. Most often these members or their families had care at home, either from skilled health professionals or from family and friends. However, nearly half of these members or their family members received care in nursing homes, and less than a third received care at assisted living facilities.



Many of these members who have used long-term care services say they ran into problems when the need for care arose. Often respondents found they had to contact many different people to get services, or got complex, unclear information about services. Perhaps more difficult, however, is that a significant number did not have time to plan for these services, and had to make decision in a crisis situation. About one-third said they did not know who to contact for help.

**Problems Facing Members Needing Long-Term Care  
(N=297)**

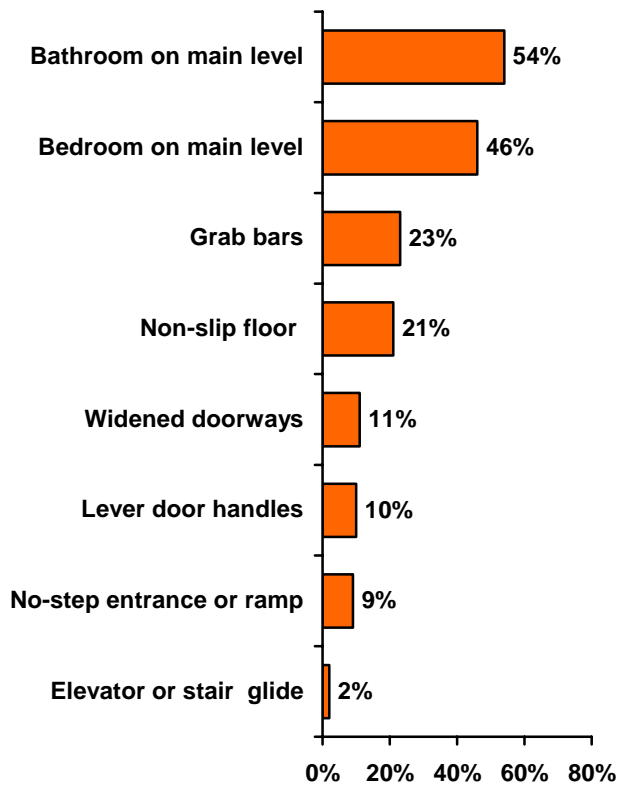


**State Issues: Housing**

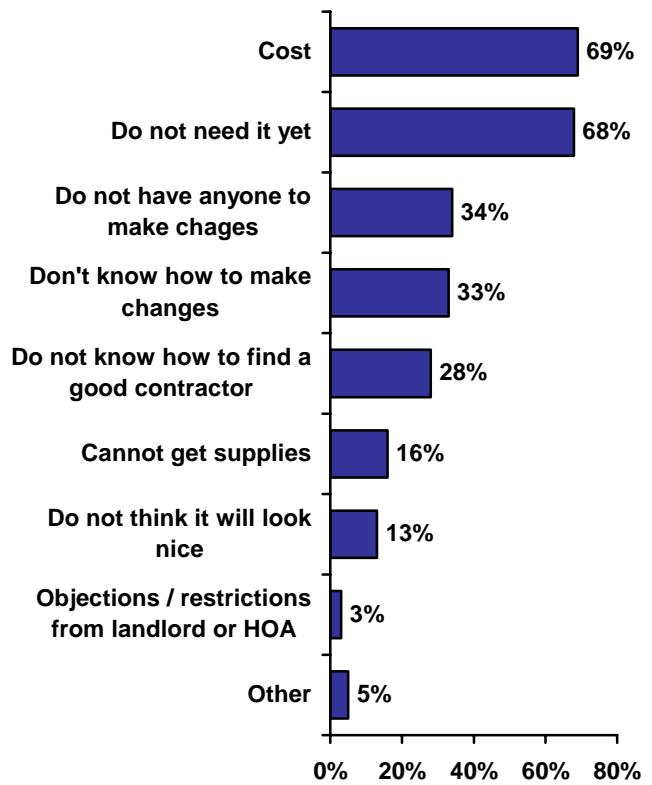
**Most members own their own homes, and aside from having a bathroom and bedroom on the main level, few have modified their homes to support “aging in place.”**

Nearly ninety percent (87%) of AARP Vermont members own their homes. When asked whether they have modified their homes to support independent living and “aging in place,” many have not. From a list of possible modifications that can be made to a home in this regard, the most common modification members have made to their homes is to locate a bathroom or bedroom on the main level. About one in five (20%) respondents say they have considered making one or more of these modifications listed below to their homes, but most often cost (69%) and not feeling they need it yet (68%) has prevented them from making the change.

**Modifications Made to Home to Support “Aging in Place”**  
(N=1,048)



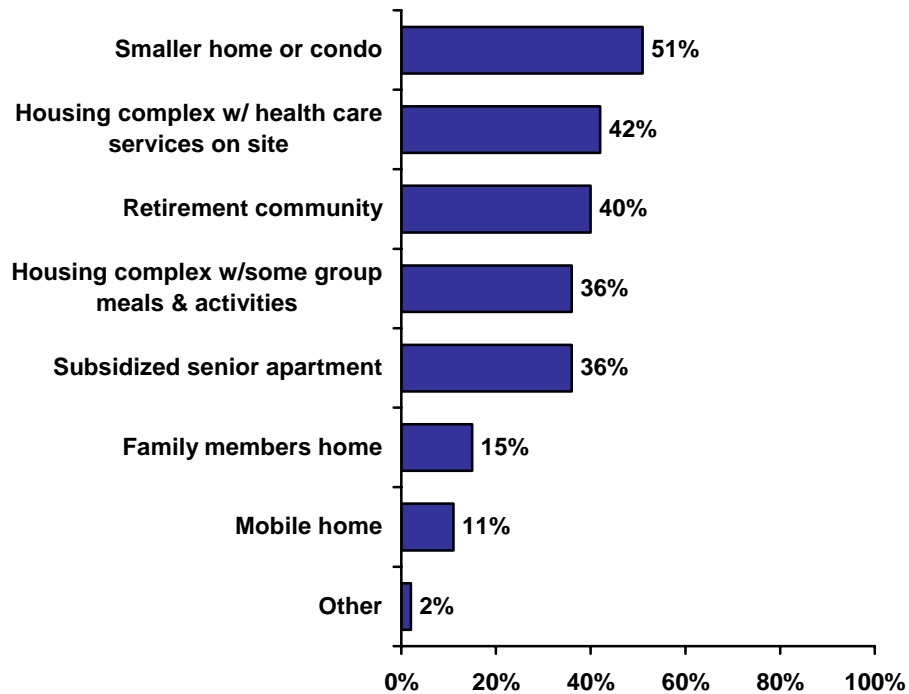
**Reasons Modifications Have Not Yet Been Made**  
(n=196 who have considered change)



**Most members do not think there are affordable housing options available in their community, and would prefer to down-size or move to retirement communities if they had to move.**

Only about one-third (34%) of Vermont members say there is affordable housing options available to them in their community, if they could no longer stay in their home or wanted to move. One-quarter (26%) say there is not affordable housing options in their community, and four in ten (39%) are not sure. However, if they could no longer stay in their home or wanted to move, members would most often opt to move to a smaller house or condominium. About four in ten members would like to move into assisted living or a retirement community, if they could no longer stay in their home or wanted to move. Only 15 percent would opt to move in with family.

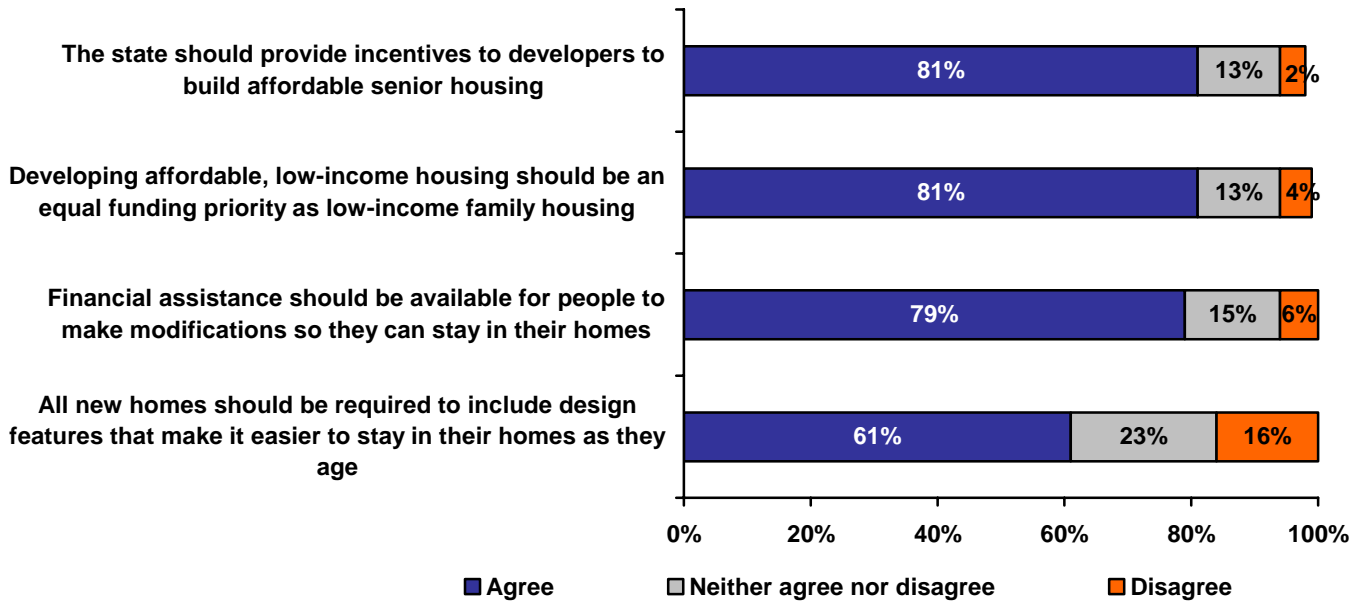
**Residence Types Member Would Like to Stay if They Could Not Stay in Their Home or Wanted to Move**  
(N=1,048)



**Eight in ten respondents believe that more should be done to develop affordable senior housing, and most would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports legislation to ensure there is adequate affordable housing for older adults.**

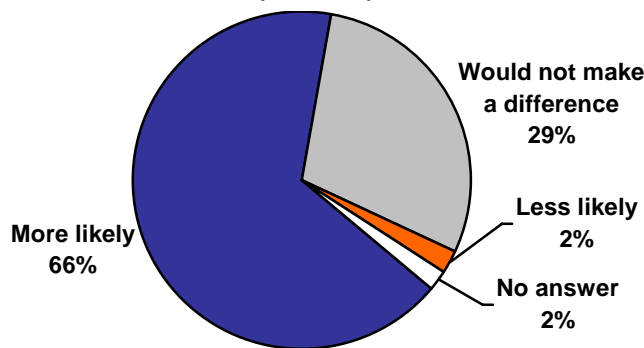
About eighty percent of AARP Vermont members think the state should do more to develop affordable senior housing, such as providing incentives to developers and making it an equal funding priority with low-income family housing. Nearly as many agree that financial assistance should be available for people to make modification so they can stay in their homes. In thinking toward the future, six in ten members agree that all new homes should be required to include design feature that would make “aging in place” easier.

**Agree or Disagree: Statements about Housing for Older Adults**  
(N=1,048)



Even with nearly all of Vermont AARP members currently owning their own homes, two-thirds still say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported legislation to ensure there is adequate, affordable housing for seniors.

**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Supports Legislation to Ensure There is Adequate Affordable Housing for Seniors**  
(N=1,048)



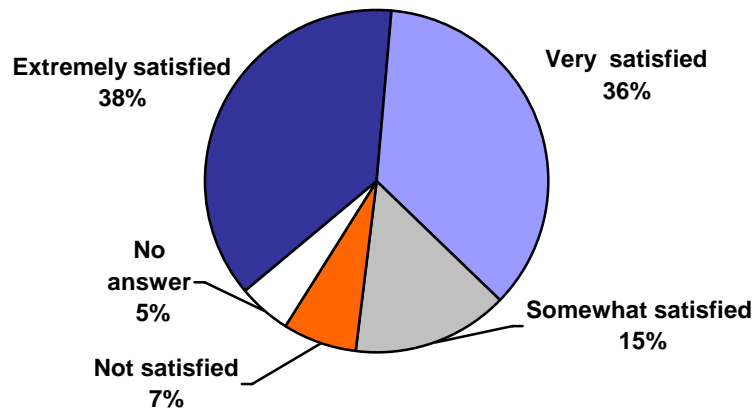
**State Issues: Transportation**

**Most AARP Vermont members drive when they want to go somewhere, and are generally satisfied with how they get around in their communities.**

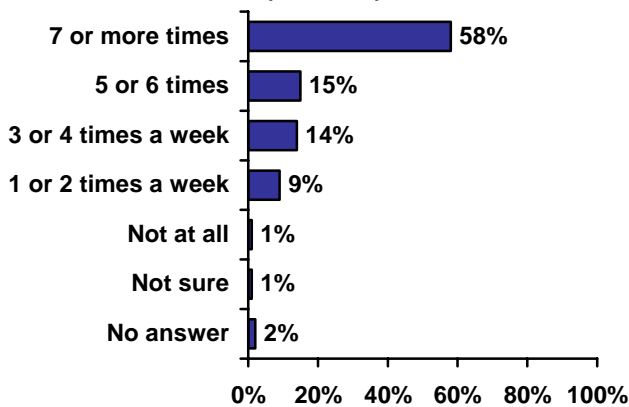
Nine out of ten Vermont members say they have driven in the last month (92%), and generally drive when they need to go somewhere (87%). Only six percent say they get rides from family or friends, and one percent or less walk (1%), take taxis (<.05%), use volunteer drivers (<.05%), or other public transportation service (<.05%) when they need to go somewhere. About five percent of members say they have stopped driving due to health conditions.

Overall, AARP Vermont members are satisfied with how they get around in their communities, and most are getting out of their homes as often as they would like, which for nearly three-quarters of members is five or more times per week.

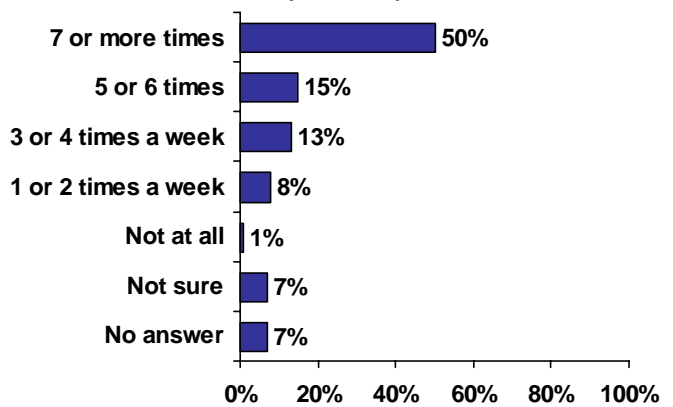
**Member Satisfaction with Getting Around Their Community (N=1,048)**



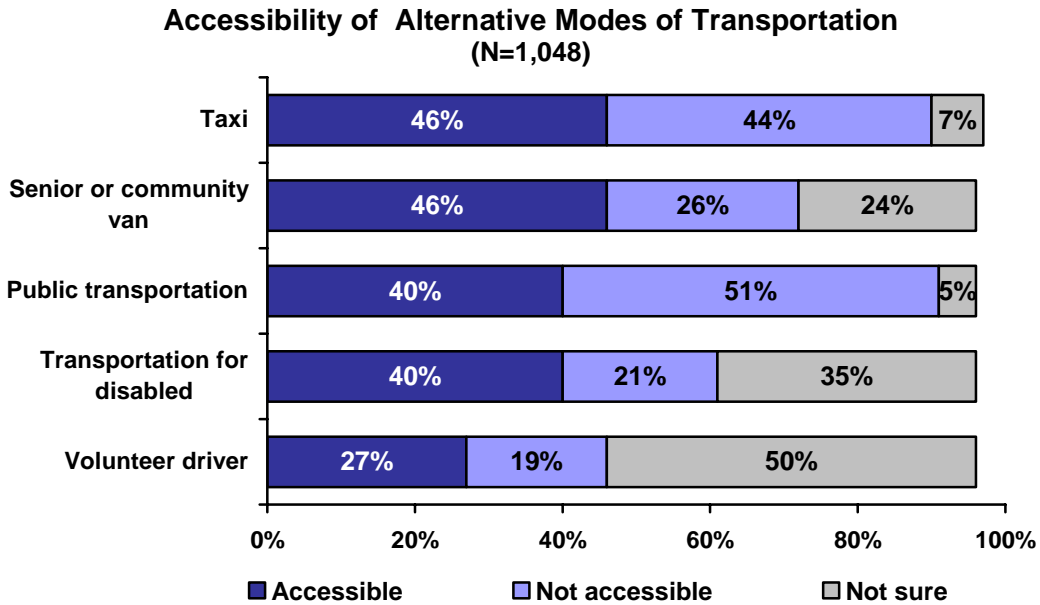
**How Often Vermont Members Get Out of Their Homes in an Average Week (N=1,048)**



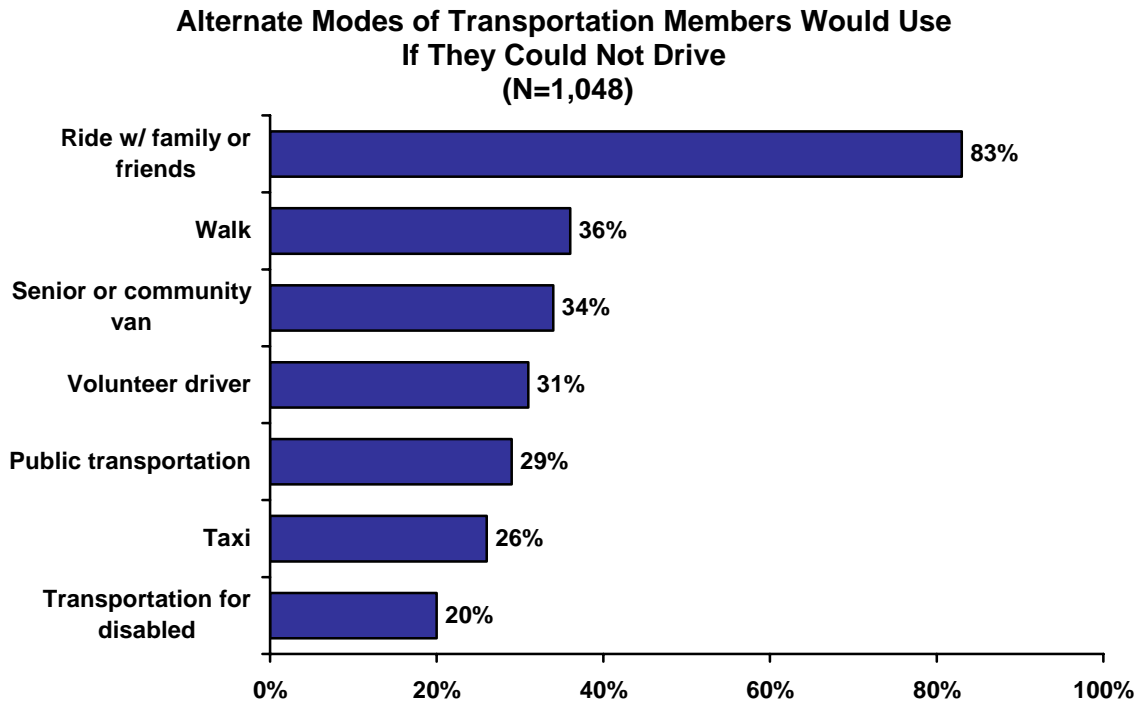
**How Often Vermont Members Would Like to Get Out of Their Homes in an Average Week (N=1,048)**



As noted earlier, most AARP Vermont members drive. This, in part, may be due to inaccessibility of and lack of knowledge about alternative modes of transportation. For instance, half of members in Vermont say that public transportation is either not very or not at all accessible in their community, and the same percentage say they do not know whether there is a volunteer driver program in their community for people who cannot drive.



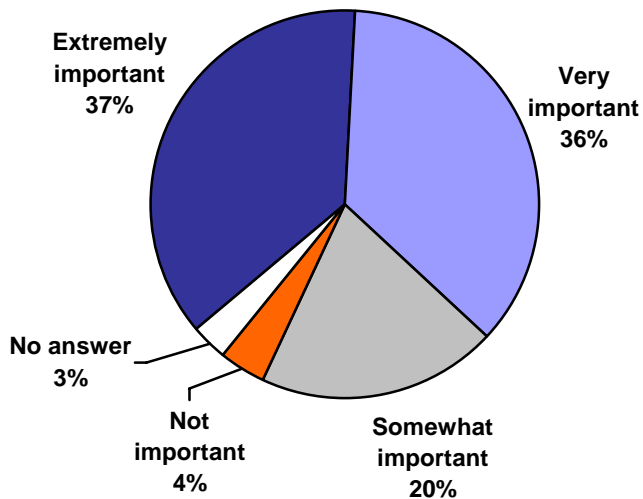
If faced with the inability to drive, members most often say they would ask for rides with family and friends. About a third say they would walk or use a senior or community van.



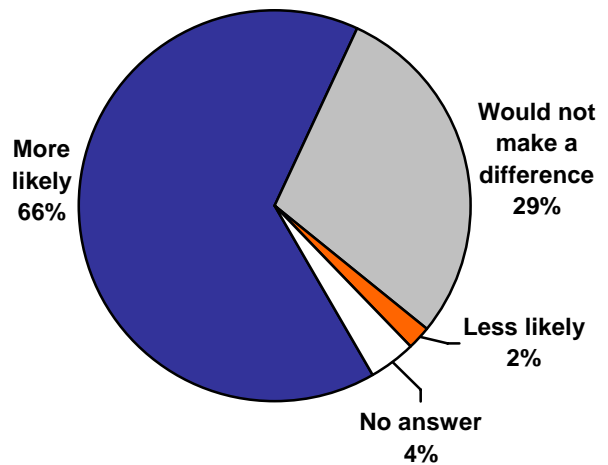
**Most Vermont members think it is important that Vermont increase funding for public transportation programs, particularly those serving older adults and persons with disabilities, and the majority would be more likely to vote for candidates if they supported expansion of funding for these programs.**

Even though the vast majority of AARP members in the state drive, three-quarters of respondents believe it is extremely or very important that Vermont increase funding for public transportation programs, particularly those serving the elderly and persons with disabilities. Moreover, two-thirds of members say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported such funding increases.

**Importance of Vermont Increasing Funding for Public Transportation Programs, Particularly Those Serving the Elderly and Disabled (N=1,048)**



**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate who Supports Increasing Funding for Public Transportation Programs Serving the Elderly and Disabled (N=1,048)**

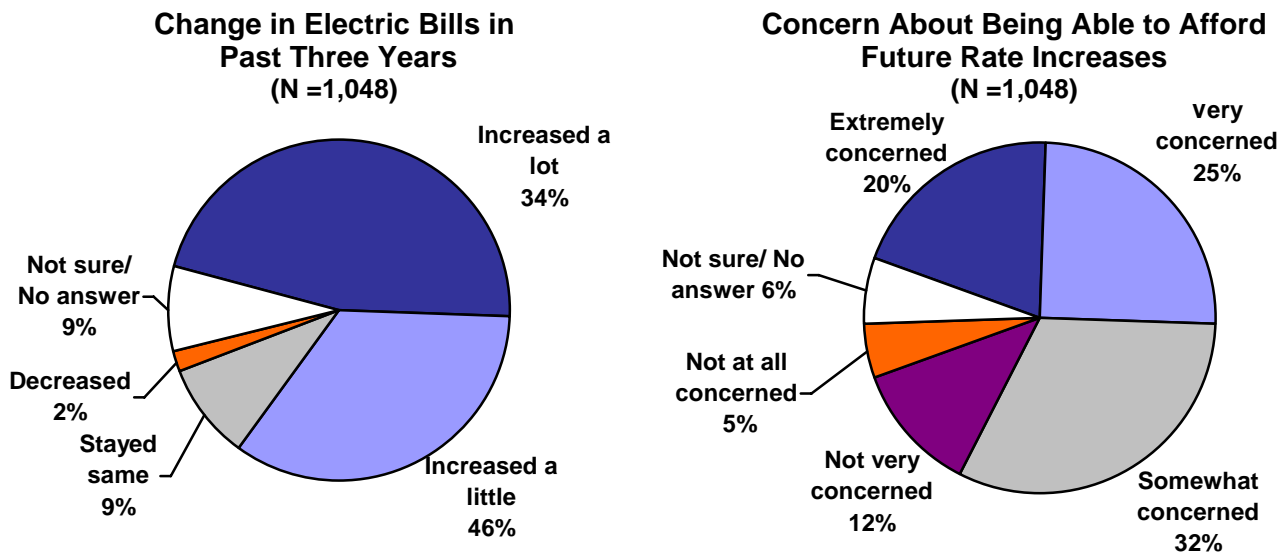




## State Issues: Electricity

**Most members have seen increases in their electric bills in the past three years and are concerned about being able to afford these bills in the future.**

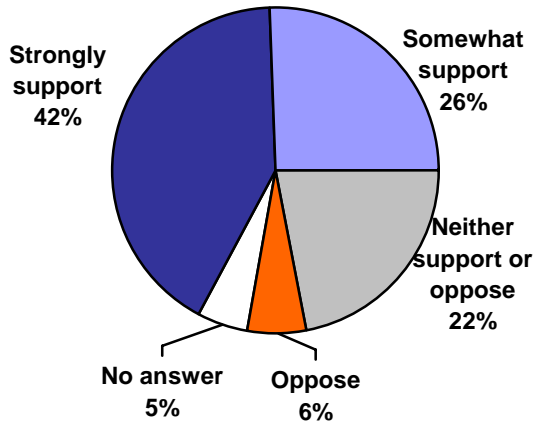
Eight in ten members say that their electric bills have increased in the past three years. About ten percent report their bills have been stable over this period of time, and only two percent have witnessed a decrease. About eight in ten also say they are at least somewhat concerned about their ability to afford future electric rate increases, with one in five being extremely concerned about this.



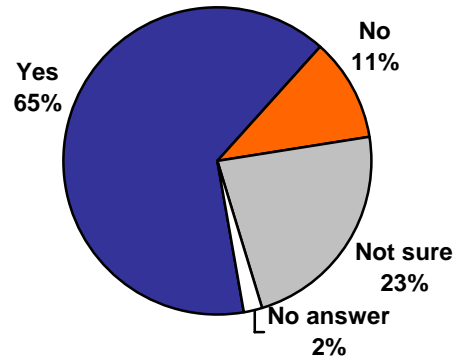
**Nearly seven in ten respondents say they support the Vermont legislature creating and funding a state program that helps make electricity affordable to households with low incomes, and most of these respondents would still support such a program even if everyone had to pay \$1.25 each month to pay for it.**

When asked how strongly they would support or oppose the Vermont legislature creating and funding a state program that helps make electricity affordable to households with low incomes, nearly seven in ten respondents say they support the proposal, either strongly or somewhat. Only seven percent oppose it. Among those who support instituting this low-income program, two-thirds would still support it even if it meant everyone had to pay an additional \$1.25 each month on their electric bill to pay for the program.

**Support for a Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (N =1,048)**

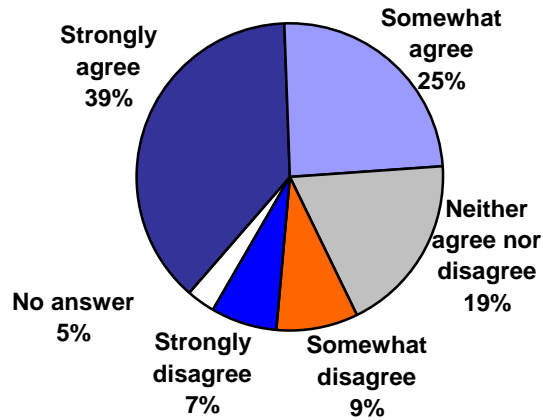


**Support for a Low-Income Program, Even if All Customers Paid \$1.25 Each Month to Fund It (n=706 members who support the program)**



If there was a low-income electric assistance program in Vermont, the majority of respondents agree that all customers, including business, industrial, and commercial users should contribute to the program.

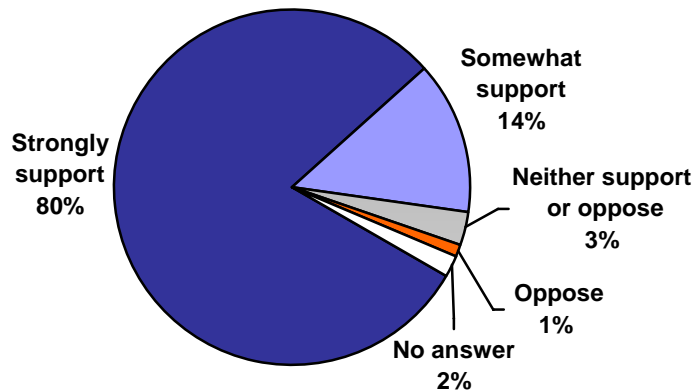
**Agree or Disagree:  
“All customers, including business, industrial, and commercial electric users should contribute to the program.” (N=1,048)**



## State Issues: Livable Communities

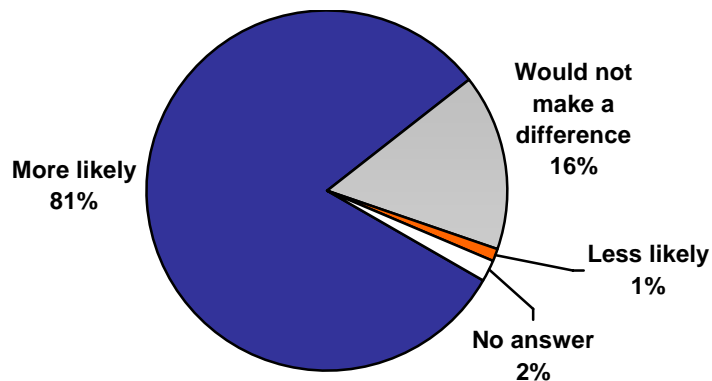
When asked how strongly they would support or oppose AARP Vermont advocating for initiatives that help people remain in their own homes or communities, such as affordable housing options, affordable electricity, and public transportation, members overwhelmingly responded supportively, with eight in ten saying they strongly support AARP advocating for livable communities initiatives.

**Support for AARP Advocating for Initiatives That Help People Remain in Their Own Homes or Communities, Such as Affordable Housing Options, Affordable Electricity, and Public Transportation**  
(N=1,048)



As a further indicator of interest, eight in ten members also said they would be more likely to vote for candidates for state office who supported livable community initiatives, such as affordably housing, affordable electricity, and public transportation expansion.

**Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Supports Initiatives That Help People Remain in Their Own Homes or Communities, Such as Affordable Housing, Affordable Electricity, and Public Transportation.**  
(N=1,048)



## **Conclusions**

The results of this survey with AARP members in Vermont show that federal issues, such as health care and Medicare, as well as state issues, such as long-term care, affordable housing, utilities, and transportation, could influence how members vote in the 2006 election.

AARP members in Vermont believe that major national health care reform should be enacted and that the federal government should make sure that everyone has at least minimum coverage in this regard. While there is less agreement on how this should be achieved, the majority of members agree with the concept of shared contributions from government, business, and individuals. What is more, congressional candidates who support this concept are also likely to sway more members in their favor.

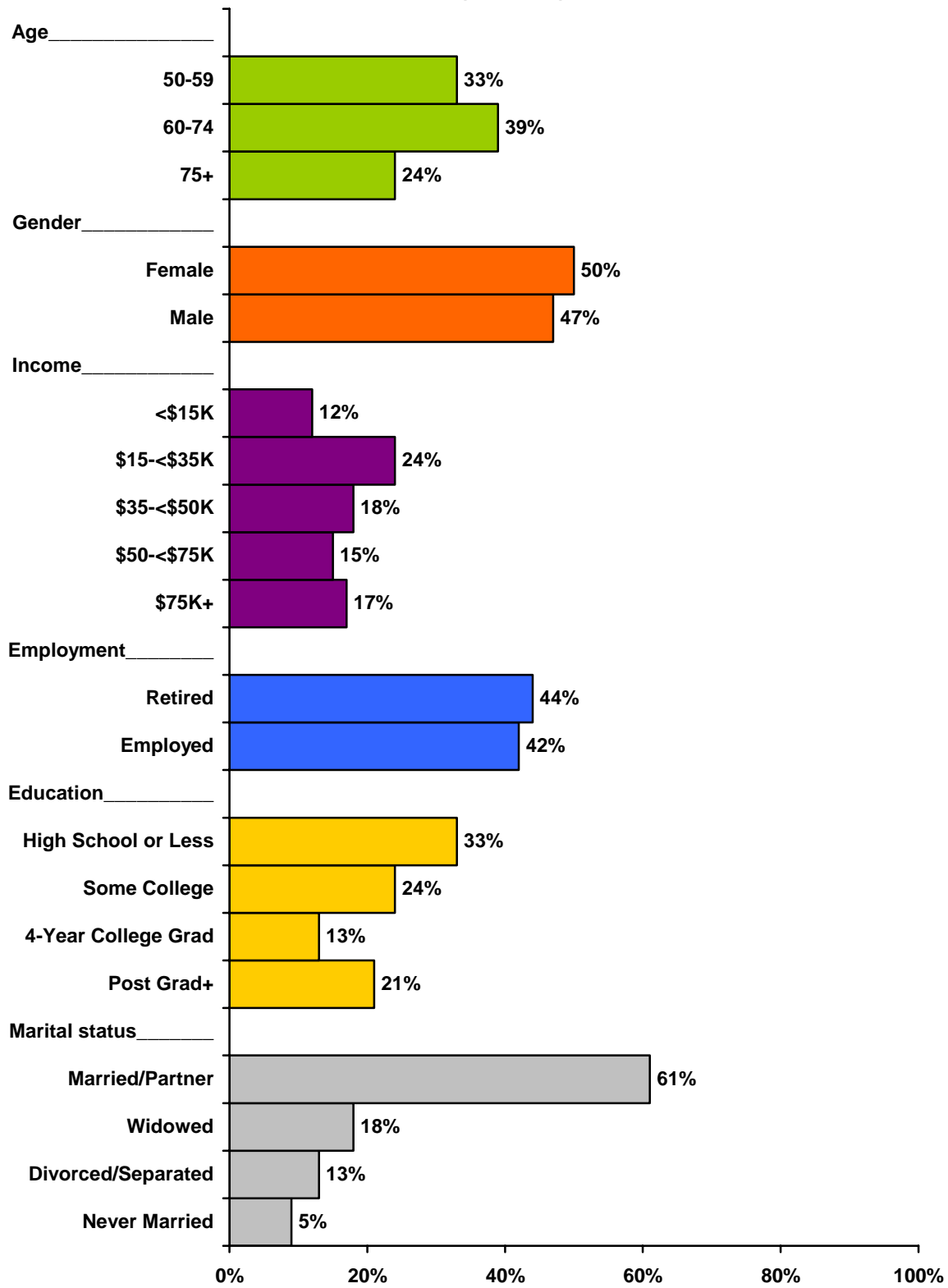
Medicare reform proposals are also likely to get the attention of AARP Vermont members this election year, especially one that would allow Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs. Members in the State strongly agree that this should be done and would be more likely to vote for candidates who think the same.

At the state level, members are very supportive of proposals that would make it easier for them to remain in their homes as they get older, from expanded long-term care services and public transportation to affordable housing and electric utilities. Even though most members own their own homes and currently drive, it is likely an eye on the future that leads members to support expansion of public transportation and affordable housing for seniors. And once again, members say they are more likely to vote for candidates who support proposals that will help them achieve this goal of living independently for as long as possible.

## **Methodology**

AARP conducted the Vermont Legislative Issue Survey from July 26 through August 23, 2006. Mail surveys were sent to a randomly selected sample of 2,000 members, stratified by age, so as to select members proportionate to each of three age groups: 50-59, 60-74, and 75+. Each sampled member was contacted about the survey in four ways: a pre-notification postcard, the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. Of those surveyed, 1,048 returned completed questionnaires by the survey end date, yielding a response rate of 52 percent. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.0 percent. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the actual distribution of members by age. Throughout the report, statistics representing member responses are reported in percentages. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

## Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=1,048)



## **Appendix Annotated Questionnaire**

# 2006 AARP Vermont Election Issues Survey

AARP Members Weighted N =1,048; Response Rate =52%; Sampling Error =+/-3.0%  
 (Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding)

## Long-Term Care

Long-term care refers to care provided over an extended period of time. People of all ages who are frail, ill, or disabled and need assistance with such activities as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating receive long-term care. This care can be provided at home, in a community setting, or in a nursing home.

**1. If you or any member of your family needed long-term care services, how important would it be to you to have services that would help you to stay at home as long as possible?**

<u>%</u>	
65	Extremely important
26	Very important
5	Somewhat important
1	Not very important
<.5	Not at all important
3	No answer

**2. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	<u>Strongly agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Neither agree nor disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No answer</u> <u>%</u>
a. My community has all of the services I will need as I get older .....	8	35	22	17	12	5
b. Members of my family will help take care of me as I get older .....	18	34	22	12	10	5
c. Vermont should do more to increase the <u>availability</u> of long-term care choices.....	54	29	11	1	1	4
d. Vermont should do more to ensure the <u>quality</u> of long-term care services .....	59	25	10	1	1	4

**3. In the past five years, have you or a member of your family, that is your spouse, parents, children, siblings, or grandparents, needed any long-term care services?**

<u>%</u>	
28	Yes
67	No ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 6</b>
1	Not sure ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 6</b>
4	No answer

**4. When you or a family member needed long-term care services in Vermont, did you face any of the following problems? (n=297)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
a. Did not have time to plan for these services.....	36	38	7	19
b. Made a decision in a crisis situation.....	43	34	7	17
c. Did not know who to contact.....	34	40	7	18
d. Needed to contact many different people.....	46	29	8	18
e. Got complex, unclear information.....	32	38	11	19

**5. Which of the following long-term care services have you or a member of your family used in the past five years? (n=297)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
a. Nursing home.....	51	32	1	17
b. Assisted-living facility or group home.....	31	47	2	20
c. Visits from skilled health professionals at home.....	66	19	1	15
d. Visits from a health aide at home.....	59	22	2	17
e. Help from family and friends while living at home....	67	17	1	15
f. Adult day care.....	8	66	2	24
g. Respite care (services to give the primary caregiver a break for a short period of time).....	18	58	3	21

**6. How strongly do you support or oppose AARP Vermont advocating for initiatives that help people remain in their own homes or communities, such as affordable housing options, affordable electricity, and public transportation?**

<b>%</b>	
80	Strongly support
14	Somewhat support
3	Neither support nor oppose
1	Somewhat oppose
<.5	Strongly oppose
2	No answer

**7. If a candidate for state office supported initiatives to make it easier for people to remain in their homes and communities, such as affordable housing options, affordable electricity, and public transportation, would you be more likely to vote for the candidate, less likely to vote for the candidate, or would it not make any difference?**

<b>%</b>	
81	More likely
16	Would not make a difference
1	Less likely
2	No answer



## Transportation

8. How often do you get out of your home and go somewhere, for example, shopping, visiting, appointments, work, or exercising in a typical week?

<u>%</u>	
1	Not at all
9	1 or 2 times
14	3 or 4 times
15	5 or 6 times
58	7 or more times
1	Not sure
2	No answer

9. How often would you like to get out of your home and go somewhere, for example, shopping, visiting, appointments, work, or exercising in a typical week?

<u>%</u>	
1	Not at all
8	1 or 2 times
13	3 or 4 times
15	5 or 6 times
50	7 or more times
7	Not sure
7	No answer

10. Have you driven a car or other motor vehicle in the last month?

<u>%</u>	
92	Yes
7	No
1	No answer

11. Have you or someone in your family stopped driving due to health conditions?

<u>%</u>	
4	Yes, <u>I</u> have stopped driving due to health
18	Yes, <u>someone in my family</u> stopped driving due to health
<.5	Yes, <u>both someone in my family and I</u> have stopped driving due to health
75	No
2	No answer

12. In general, when you need to get somewhere how do you usually get there?  
Please check only one

<u>%</u>	
1	Walk
87	Drive
6	Get a ride with family or friends
<.5	Take a taxi
<.5	Take public transportation

**12. (continued) In general, when you need to get somewhere how do you usually get there? Please check only one**

- %  
 <.5 Take a Senior or Community Van  
 <.5 Take transportation provided to people with disabilities who cannot use or get to public transportation  
 <.5 Get a ride with a volunteer driver who is part of a program offered by a local agency that pairs people who cannot drive with volunteer drivers  
 6 No answer

**13. How accessible are these types of transportation in your community?**

	<b>Very accessible</b>	<b>Somewhat accessible</b>	<b>Not very accessible</b>	<b>Not at all accessible</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Taxi.....	20	26	22	22	7	3
b. Public transportation .....	12	28	21	30	5	4
c. Senior or community van .....	14	32	14	12	24	3
d. Transportation for people with disabilities.....	12	28	13	8	35	4
e. Volunteer driver program offered by a local agency that pairs people who cannot drive with volunteer drivers.....	6	21	11	8	50	5

**14. If you were unable to drive yourself, what transportation would you use to get to the places you need and want to go?**

	<b>Would use</b>	<b>Would not use</b>	<b>Not available</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Walk.....	36	13	6	6	40
b. Ride with family or friends.....	83	1	1	3	12
c. Public transportation.....	29	5	21	9	36
d. Taxi.....	26	11	14	12	38
e. Senior or Community Van.....	34	5	9	19	34
f. Transportation for those with disabilities .....	20	8	7	23	42
g. Volunteer driver program run by a local agency that pairs people who cannot drive with volunteer drivers .....	31	4	7	22	37

**15. Overall, how satisfied are you with how you get around in your community when you want or need to go someplace?**

<u>%</u>	
38	Extremely satisfied
36	Very satisfied
15	Somewhat satisfied
5	Not very satisfied
1	Not at all satisfied
5	No answer

**16. How important is it to you that Vermont increases funding for public transportation programs, particularly those serving the elderly and persons with disabilities?**

<u>%</u>	
37	Extremely important
36	Very important
20	Somewhat important
3	Not very important
2	Not at all important
3	No answer

**17. If a candidate for state office in Vermont supported expansion of funding for public transportation programs, particularly those serving the elderly and persons with disabilities, would you be more likely to vote for the candidate, less likely to vote for the candidate, or would it not make any difference?**

<u>%</u>	
66	More likely
29	Would not make a difference
2	Less likely
4	No answer

## **Electricity**

**18. On average, which of the following statements best reflects what has happened to your electric bills in the past three years?**

<u>%</u>	
34	Increased a lot
46	Increased a little
9	Stayed about the same
2	Decreased a little
<.5	Decreased a lot
4	Not sure
4	No answer

**19. How concerned are you about being able to afford to pay future electric rate increases?**

<u>%</u>	
20	Extremely concerned
25	Very concerned
32	Somewhat concerned
12	Not very concerned
5	Not at all concerned
2	Not sure
4	No answer

**20. How strongly do you support or oppose the Vermont legislature creating and funding a state program that helps make electricity affordable to households with low-incomes?**

<u>%</u>	
42	Strongly support
26	Somewhat support
22	Neither support or oppose ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 22</b>
4	Somewhat oppose ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 22</b>
3	Strongly oppose ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 22</b>
5	No answer

**21. Would you still support having a state program to provide assistance to low-income households, even if it meant everyone had to pay an additional \$1.25 each month on their electric bill to support the program? (n=706)**

<u>%</u>	
65	Yes
11	No
23	Not sure
2	No answer

**22. If there was a low-income electric assistance program in the state, do you agree or disagree that all customers, including business, industrial, and commercial electric users should contribute to the program?**

<u>%</u>	
39	Strongly agree
25	Somewhat agree
19	Neither agree nor disagree
9	Somewhat disagree
7	Strongly disagree
3	No answer

## Housing

**23. Do you currently rent or own your home?**

<u>%</u>	
9	Rent
87	Own
4	Other
1	No answer

**24. Homes can be modified to support independent living and “aging in place.” Have you modified your home with any of the following features?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Lever door handles.....	10	81	8
b. Grab bars.....	23	70	7
c. No-step entrance or entrance ramp.....	9	83	8
d. Bathroom on main level.....	54	39	6
e. Bedroom on main level.....	46	47	7
f. Non-slip floor surfaces.....	21	70	9
g. Widened doorways.....	11	81	9
h. Elevator or stair glide.....	2	89	9

**25. Have you considered any of these modifications for your home but have not been able to make them?**

<u>%</u>	
19	Yes
76	No ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 27</b>
6	No answer

**26. If you have considered these modifications but have not been able to make them, have any of the following reasons kept you from installing these features? (n=196)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No answer</b>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Cost.....	69	16	16
b. Do not know how to make the changes or modifications.....	33	39	28
c. Do not have anyone to do it for me.....	34	39	27
d. Objections or restrictions from landlord or homeowner’s association.....	3	62	34
e. Do not need it yet.....	68	16	16
f. Do not think it will look nice in my home.....	13	53	35
g. Cannot get the supplies or hardware needed.....	16	50	34
h. Do not know how to find a good home contractor that does home modifications.....	28	41	31
i. Other (specify)_____			

**27. How strongly do you agree or disagree that all new homes should be required to include design features that make it easier for people to stay in their homes as they age?**

<u>%</u>	
31	Strongly agree
30	Somewhat agree
23	Neither agree nor disagree
8	Somewhat disagree
8	Strongly disagree
1	No answer

**28. How strongly do you agree or disagree that financial assistance should be available for people to make modifications so they can stay in their homes?**

<u>%</u>	
38	Strongly agree
41	Somewhat agree
15	Neither agree nor disagree
4	Somewhat disagree
2	Strongly disagree
1	No answer

**29. If you could no longer stay in your home or wanted to move, are there affordable housing options available in your community?**

<u>%</u>	
34	Yes
26	No
38	Not sure
2	No answer

**30. If you could no longer stay in your home or wanted to move, into which of the following types of housing would you like to move?**

	Yes	No	Not sure	No answer
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Retirement community .....	40	16	20	23
b. Housing complex with some group meals and activities .....	36	18	20	26
c. Housing complex with health care services on site, such as assisted living .....	42	15	19	24
d. Smaller home or condominium .....	51	15	11	23
e. Family member's house .....	15	44	14	27
f. Subsidized apartment for seniors .....	36	23	17	24
g. Mobile home community .....	11	44	11	34
h. Other: specify	2	-	-	-

**31. How strongly do you agree or disagree that developing affordable, low-income, senior housing should be an equal funding priority with developing affordable, low-income, family housing?**

<u>%</u>	
43	Strongly agree
38	Somewhat agree
13	Neither agree nor disagree
3	Somewhat disagree
2	Strongly disagree
3	No answer

**32. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the state should provide incentives to developers to build affordable senior housing?**

<u>%</u>	
47	Strongly agree
34	Somewhat agree
13	Neither agree nor disagree
2	Somewhat disagree
2	Strongly disagree
2	No answer

**33. If a candidate for state office in Vermont supported legislation to ensure there is adequate affordable housing for seniors, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for him or her, or would it not make any difference?**

<u>%</u>	
66	More likely
29	Would not make a difference
2	Less likely
2	No answer

## Health Care

### 34. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Major national health care reform should be enacted. ....	59	22	10	2	3	4
b. The federal government should see that everyone has at least a minimum health benefit.....	61	22	7	3	3	3
c. The federal government's role in helping low-income people get health coverage should be expanded.....	48	26	14	4	3	5
d. The federal government's role in helping people with disabilities get health coverage should be expanded.....	52	25	13	3	3	4
e. Federal legislation and regulation should encourage Health Savings Accounts by providing or increasing tax credits .....	32	30	23	6	4	6
f. One percent of all taxes should be earmarked to pay for health care in the U.S. ....	38	23	26	4	5	4
g. The federal government, employers, and individuals should all contribute to pay for health care coverage for everyone. ....	42	23	17	6	7	4



## Medicare

### 35. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Medicare should be expanded to cover all of the uninsured by permitting them to “buy-in” to the Medicare program. ....	24	31	27	6	5	7
b. Medicare should be expanded to cover long-term care, such as nursing homes and home care.....	43	33	12	4	3	5
c. Medicare should be allowed to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs. ...	73	17	4	1	1	5
d. The eligibility age for Medicare should be lowered from age 65 to age 60 to provide health care coverage to more people. ....	27	22	22	13	11	5
e. The Medicare payroll tax should be increased to aid the financial solvency of Medicare in future years. ....	20	32	26	9	6	6

### 36. If a candidate for Congress or the U.S. Senate supported allowing Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make any difference?

<u>%</u>	
71	More likely
24	Would not make a difference
1	Less likely
4	No answer

### 37. If a candidate for Congress or the U.S. Senate supported a shared approach by the federal government, employers, and individuals to provide health care coverage for everyone, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make any difference?

<u>%</u>	
56	More likely
32	Would not make a difference
7	Less likely
5	No answer

## About You

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

- 38. In the last 12 months, have you accessed the Internet from your home, work, or from some other source such as your local library?**

<u>%</u>	
61	Yes
36	No
3	No answer

- 39. Are you male or female?**

<u>%</u>	
47	Male
50	Female
3	No answer

- 40. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ (in years)**

<u>%</u>	
33	50-59
39	60-74
24	75+
5	No answer

- 41. What is your current marital status?**

<u>%</u>	
58	Now married
3	Living with partner
18	Widowed
1	Separated
12	Divorced
5	Single, that is never married
4	No answer

- 42. Thinking about your state elections for Vermont Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior?**

<u>%</u>	
68	Always vote
21	Sometimes miss one
4	Rarely vote
4	Never vote
3	No answer

**43. How interested are you in State government activities that affect residents age 50 and older?**

<u>%</u>	
30	Extremely interested
36	Very interested
26	Somewhat interested
3	Not very interested
1	Not at all interested
2	Not sure
3	No answer

**44. Which of the following activities have you participated in within the last 5 years?**

	<u>Yes</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>%</u>	<u>No</u> <u>answer</u> <u>%</u>
a. Phoned or written to a public official to make your views known on an issue.....	36	57	7
b. Emailed a public official to make your views known on an issue.....	21	72	8
c. Contributed money to a candidate or political party.....	32	61	8
d. Volunteered to work on a campaign for a particular candidate or party.....	10	82	9
e. Written a letter to a newspaper or called a radio or TV show to make your views known on an issue.....	13	79	8
f. Attended a political event .....	27	65	8
g. Attended a town meeting .....	53	41	7
h. Volunteered with a group working to influence local government .....	12	80	8
i. Volunteered with a group working to influence state government.....	8	83	9
j. Volunteered with a group working to influence national government .....	7	85	9

**45. What is the highest level of education that you completed?**

<u>%</u>	
7	0-12 <sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)
26	High school graduate (or equivalent)
6	Post-high school vocational or technical training
12	Some college (no degree)
6	2-year college degree
13	4-year college degree
6	Post-graduate study
15	Graduate or professional degree (s)
9	No answer

**46. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

<u>%</u>	
31	Employed or self-employed full-time
12	Employed or self-employed part-time
1	Unemployed, looking for work
44	Retired, not working at all
2	Homemaker
4	Other
7	No answer

**47. What is your 5-digit zip code? (write in your zip code.)** \_\_\_\_ \_

**48. In what county do you live? (write in county.)**

<u>%</u>	
4	Addison
5	Bennington
5	Caledonia
16	Chittenden
1	Essex
5	Franklin
1	Grand Isle
4	Lamoille
5	Orange
5	Orleans
11	Rutland
9	Washington
7	Windham
8	Windsor
<.5	Other
16	No answer

**49. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2005?**

<u>%</u>	
12	Less than \$15,000
24	\$15,000 to less than \$35,000
18	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000
15	\$50,000 to less than \$75,000
10	\$75,000 to less than \$100,000
7	\$100,000 or more
14	No answer

**50. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, a Progressive, or something else?**

<u>%</u>	
28	Democrat
21	Republican
31	Independent
1	Progressive
10	Other
10	No answer

**51. How would you characterize your political views?**

<u>%</u>	
22	Conservative
40	Moderate
18	Liberal
10	None of the above
10	No answer

**52. How would you describe your current health?**

<u>%</u>	
29	Very good
47	Good
16	Fair
3	Poor
<.4	Very poor
5	No answer

**53. Does any disability, handicap, or chronic disease keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities?**

<u>%</u>	
25	Yes
70	No
5	No answer

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by August 23, 2006.**

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