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2009 AARP Voters' Guide

New York Congressional District 23

How to use the AARP Voters' Guide:
Here's how this Voters' Guide works. AARP asked key questions about issues important to our members and their families of each major candidate for this race. Each candidate was allowed up to 125 words to answer each question. AARP did not edit or modify those answers. The candidates were asked to check the support or oppose circles. The candidates may have chosen not to check a circle.

AARP has provided a summary of our position for each of the issues.

- Pass this guide on to friends and family.
- Share your views with the candidates.
- Ask for clarification from any candidate whose answer seems unclear.

Be sure to vote on November 3.

www.aarp.org/ny

Health Care

Q: *What policies would you support to make health care and health insurance more affordable--particularly for the 50-64 age population? What policies would you support to protect and improve Medicare benefits as part of health care reform?*

AARP's Position:

Affordable coverage for individuals age 50-64.

Support Oppose

Guarantee that Medicare benefits will be protected in any health care reform legislation.

Support Oppose

Closing the Part D coverage gap (the so-called "doughnut hole") should be part of any health care reform legislation.

Support Oppose

AARP believes that comprehensive health care reform legislation should strengthen and improve Medicare and ensure Americans age 50-64 have a choice of health insurance plans they can afford. Insurance companies should be prevented from denying people coverage because of a pre-existing condition or using age to price Americans age 50+ out of affordable, quality coverage. AARP also believes that health care reform should close the Medicare Part D coverage gap, or "doughnut hole," that requires Medicare beneficiaries to continue to pay premiums but fails to assist them with their prescription drug costs. AARP recognizes and supports changes to Medicare that improve care and strengthen the program and we will oppose any legislative proposals that will cut benefits, raise out of pocket costs or reduce access to care.

Doug Hoffman (C):

Affordable coverage for individuals age 50-64.

Support Oppose

Guarantee that Medicare benefits will be protected in any health care reform legislation.

Support Oppose

Closing the Part D coverage gap (the so-called "doughnut hole") should be part of any health care reform legislation.

Support Oppose

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Bill Owens (D):

Affordable coverage for individuals age 50-64.

Support Oppose

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Support Oppose

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Support Oppose

I believe that our health insurance system is broken and needs reform. Healthcare reform is critical in helping create jobs and getting our economy back on track. I support reform that would:

- Cover the millions of Americans who don't have health insurance
- Cut down on rising health insurance costs
- Stop insurance companies from denying coverage to Americans who have pre-existing Conditions
- Guarantee that small businesses and individuals have access to the same lower rates available to large corporations and federal government employees

I oppose:

- Medicare benefit cuts. We can all agree that there are inefficiencies and waste in the system, but any savings should be used to strengthen Medicare
- Taxing health care benefits.
- Increasing taxes on the middle class in any way.

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Support Oppose

Dede Scozzafava (R):

Affordable coverage for individuals age 50-64.

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It is important that legislation to reform the health care system increases access and affordability for all individuals. I will work for reforms that bring more doctors, specialists, and other allied health care professionals to Northern and Central New York. To be clear: health care reform legislation must not weaken Medicare. I will also work to significantly address and close the "doughnut hole" to ensure that seniors can afford to pay for medication every day. Today, the formula used to index Social Security payments is unrealistic and does not account for how people actually spend their limited income. We need to ensure that all folks are able to afford the needed prescriptions and ability to access healthcare across Northern New York.

Transportation

Q *Our nation's infrastructure is crumbling and must be repaired. In the course of fixing our roads and bridges, do you support policies to improve roadway design to make sure that streets are safe for all persons regardless of age, physical ability and mode of transportation?*

AARP's Position:

Create a Complete Streets safe design policy for users of all ages

Support Oppose

Fund roadway safety guidelines for older drivers and pedestrians.

Support Oppose

AARP believes that transportation is essential in connecting individuals with their communities. Americans want safe transportation choices. AARP supports a national Complete Streets policy that directs state and regional transportation agencies to adopt policies that ensure streets are routinely designed and operated to enable safe travel for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are a driver, pedestrian, transit user or bicyclist. In addition, states need additional funding to implement federal roadway safety guidelines for older drivers and pedestrians so that intersections, signs, pavement markings, signals, and lighting work better for older road users. AARP supports funding for states to implement these cost-effective federal guidelines which will make roads safer for everyone.

Doug Hoffman (C):

Create a Complete Streets safe design policy for users of all ages

Support Oppose

Fund roadway safety guidelines for older drivers and pedestrians.

Support Oppose

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Bill Owens (D):

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Support Oppose

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Support Oppose

Yes, I support policies to improve roadway design to make sure that streets are safe for all individuals. Additionally, I support efforts to repair the nation's infrastructure. In the North Country, I support construction of I-98 which will create good-paying jobs for area residents and also improve interstate commerce opportunities for the region.

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I believe it is critically important that our infrastructure and transportation systems provide opportunities not impediments to citizens. One of the primary roles of the federal government is to promote the construction and improvement of our nation's transportation and infrastructure. I will be supportive of efforts to improve this system to meet the needs of a 21st century economy and of a more active, but also aging society. As a member of the New York State Assembly, I have repeatedly voted for legislation to foster age-integrate communities for assisting mixed-use age integrated housing development. I have also supported legislation to require the Commissioner of Transportation to undertake a comprehensive study of ways to mitigate dangers to senior citizens in any and all areas.



Will you support or oppose legislation that restores the full protections for older workers under the nation's age discrimination laws?

AARP's Position:

Restore the full protections of the age discrimination laws.

Support **Oppose**

Strengthen rights and remedies for those who are victims of age discrimination.

Support **Oppose**

Doug Hoffman (C):

Restore the full protections of the age discrimination laws.

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Bill Owens (D):

Restore the full protections of the age discrimination laws.

Support **Oppose**

Strengthen rights and remedies for those who are victims of age discrimination

Support **Oppose**

I oppose age discrimination and will support legislation to restore full protection for older workers.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), enacted in 1967, protects workers who are 40 and older from age-based, work-related discrimination. The United States Supreme Court has recently issued a number of decisions that have limited the effectiveness of the ADEA, making it very difficult for older workers to prove unlawful discrimination on the basis of age. These decisions have also limited the relief that can be provided to older workers who prove age discrimination. Congress should pass legislation that restores the full protections of the age discrimination law and strengthen the rights and remedies for victims of age discrimination, similar to the relief provided to individuals who have been discriminated against based on race, sex, religion or national origin.

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Dede Scozzafava (R):

Restore the full protections of the age discrimination laws.

Support Oppose

Strengthen rights and remedies for those who are victims of age discrimination

Support Oppose

Regardless of age, people in the work place should feel comfortable and not be exposed to any form of discrimination. Judicial decisions have limited the original intent of Congress with regard to this type of legislation and such legislation or laws must be examined carefully, and when necessary, addressed through further legislative action. Let me be clear that I firmly support ensuring that seniors are not discriminated against in the workplace or in any other area and I will pledge that this issue will be something closely looked at within my office.

Social Security



Will you support or oppose a balanced Social Security plan to continue the program's guaranteed benefits for future generations?
Will you support or oppose diverting Social Security payroll taxes to fund private individual retirement accounts?

AARP's Position:

Create a balanced Social Security plan to ensure guaranteed benefits.

Support Oppose

Divert Social Security payroll taxes to individual retirement accounts.

Support Oppose

Doug Hoffman (C):

Create a balanced Social Security plan to ensure guaranteed benefits.

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Bill Owens (D):

Create a balanced Social Security plan to ensure guaranteed benefits.

Support Oppose

Divert Social Security payroll taxes to individual retirement accounts.

Support Oppose

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The candidate did not respond by the printing deadline.

I believe we must ensure that Social Security remains solvent for current and future generations. I support guaranteed benefits for Social Security and strongly oppose individual retirement accounts.

Social Security has provided peace of mind for Americans for over 70 years. The program's guaranteed, inflation adjusted benefit protects families when a worker retires, becomes disabled or dies. We all benefit from the shared responsibility of providing for today's beneficiaries, with the knowledge that future generations will also share the responsibility for us. AARP believes that a bipartisan plan that balances additional contributions from higher income workers with modest adjustments in future benefits can maintain Social Security's guaranteed benefits for future generations. AARP supports individual retirement accounts in addition to current guaranteed Social Security benefits, but believes diverting Social Security taxes from the Trust Fund to fund private individual retirement accounts instead of Social Security would weaken the program and create a mountain of new federal debt.

Q: *Will you support or oppose a balanced Social Security plan to continue the program's guaranteed benefits for future generations? Will you support or oppose diverting Social Security payroll taxes to fund private individual retirement accounts?*

AARP's Position:

Create a balanced Social Security plan to ensure guaranteed benefits.

Support **Oppose**

Divert Social Security payroll taxes to individual retirement accounts.

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Social Security provides critical benefits to nearly 50 million Americans, including widows and those with disabilities - it is every American's responsibility to ensure that Social Security is defended at every turn. We need to make sure the program remains solvent and provides future generations with the safety net that others have enjoyed. Some of the attempts to "reform" social security while meritorious in intension present problems in application — we need to protect benefits, ensure the retirement age is not raised and taxes should not be increased. Social Security is too important an issue and requires a bipartisan approach which I hope to bring to Washington.

Long-Term Care

Q: *How would you shift long-term care services and financing so that people can afford to stay in their homes and communities as long as appropriate?*

AARP's Position:

Increase consumer choice and control for people
 Support Oppose

Improve standards and incentives for quality care.
 Support Oppose

Provide family caregiving initiatives, such as respite care.
 Support Oppose

Doug Hoffman (C):

Increase consumer choice and control for people
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Increase consumer choice and control for people
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Provide family caregiving initiatives, such as respite care.
 Support Oppose

At some point, most Americans will need supportive services to help with daily activities (such as dressing or bathing). The vast majority strongly prefer receiving care in their homes and communities rather than in more costly nursing homes or other institutions. However, government programs for long-term care are often geared toward institutions, making home and community-based services much harder to receive. The caregiving burden - both physical and economic - is often overwhelming for millions of families. AARP supports shifting long-term care programs to more home and community services to help people stay in their homes and communities as long as appropriate. Consumers should have more choices and improved quality of care across all settings, and the caregiving burden on millions of families should be eased.

The candidate chose not to mark a circle.

The candidate did not respond by the printing deadline.

I agree with AARP and support shifting of long-term care programs to include more home and community services so individuals can stay in their homes as long as is medically appropriate.

Long Term Care



How would you shift long-term care services and financing so that people can afford to stay in their homes and communities as long as appropriate?

AARP's Position:

Increase consumer choice and control for people needing long-term care

Support Oppose

Improve standards and incentives for quality care.

Support Oppose

Provide family caregiving initiatives, such as respite care.

Support Oppose

Dede Scozzafava (R):

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Healthcare in Northern and Central New York presents many challenges to all involved; one of the most difficult is long-term care and supportive services. I believe it is critically important that seniors feel comfortable in their surroundings especially later in life. I would support all efforts to ensure seniors ability to receive healthcare and long-term care in their homes and communities whenever possible. Utilizing advancements in medical technology and innovation are also ways that we can streamline the process of providing healthcare throughout our region to seniors especially those that are mobility restricted.



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If you are not registered to vote, go to www.aarp.org/makeadifference/politics/ and look under Tools for a form to fill out and send to your local voter registrar (the address will be there). Go to the same website if you need an application for an absentee ballot or to find out if your state allows early voting and what dates that will occur.

Voter Information Inside



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