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**Written Testimony on House Bill 33
Senate Health Committee
May 3, 2023
Holly Holtzen, State Director, AARP Ohio**

Good morning, Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Antonio and distinguished members of the Senate Health Committee.

My name is Holly Holtzen, and I serve as the State Director for AARP Ohio. AARP, with 1.5 million members in Ohio, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps empower people to choose how they live as they age, strengthens communities, and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

AARP Ohio is here today to express our support for the SFY 24-25 Ohio Department of Aging budget proposal in HB33, specifically, the Healthy Aging Grants. We support policies that increase options allowing older Ohioans to choose how they want to age. This is especially important given the size of Ohio's aging population. According to the Ohio Department of Aging, our state has 2.5 million residents over the age of 60, with the 60-plus population growing more than 20 times faster than Ohio's overall population. A recent AARP Ohio survey found that more than 80 percent of adults have expressed a desire to remain in their homes and communities as they age and prefer a home setting over a nursing home or other institutional setting.¹ In fact, aging in place is extremely important to a majority of Ohio residents age 45+; however, nearly two-thirds have real concerns regarding the affordability to do so.²

AARP is fighting to support America's nearly 48 million family caregivers who help make it possible for older Americans and other loved ones to live independently at home—where they want to be. In 2017, about 1.5 million Ohioans provided an estimated 1.3 million hours of unpaid care to an adult loved one with limitations in daily activities. The estimated economic value of their unpaid contributions was about \$1.7 billion in 2017. Family caregivers who help their loved ones remain at home count on quality services to be provided to their loved ones. Older adults and people with disabilities, overwhelmingly,

¹ Home and Community-Based Long-Term Services and Supports for Older Adults - AARP Public Policy Institute LTSS Choices Spotlight - <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2021/11/home-and-community-based-services-for-older-adults.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00153.001.pdf>

² AARP Research Vital Voices <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00351.250>

prefer to remain at home and receive care in the community for as long as possible. The additional funding in House Bill 33 makes this possible for more Ohioans.

Demand for home and community-based services (HCBS) is expected to continue to increase over time as the 65+ population grows larger and older and has a greater need for long-term services and supports. Most people who receive HCBS are older adults and people of all ages with disabilities. In 2018, for example, about 12.6 million American adults living in the community needed LTSS, and more than half (6.7 million) were over age 65.³

If our state is to fulfill its bold vision that “Ohio is the best place to age in the nation,” then measures included in the Ohio Department of Aging’s budget must be passed. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Department of Aging budget proposal in House Bill 33. We look forward to testifying in the near future about other actions to improve the lives of older Ohioans and their families.

³ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2021/11/home-and-community-based-services-for-older-adults.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00153.001.pdf>