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Testimony of
Holly Saelens, Manager, Government Affairs
AARP Ohio
Before the Senate General Government Committee
On SB 475
September 29, 2026

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the committee, my name is Holly Saelens, and I am the Manager, Government Affairs for AARP Ohio. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. In Ohio, AARP represents more than 1.5 million members and their families. We engage on issues that affect financial security, independence, and quality of life—and we also work to ensure that Ohioans can participate fully in our democratic process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 475 regarding the proposed temporary suspension of Ohio's motor fuel tax. AARP Ohio submits this testimony as an interested party, recognizing both the affordability challenges facing older Ohioans and the importance of preserving reliable, sustainable transportation infrastructure.

SB 475 includes two important safeguards: $725 million in General Revenue Fund funding intended to hold motor-fuel-tax revenues harmless, and a requirement that the full benefit of the tax reduction to be passed through to consumers. These provisions are important to protect transportation funding and help ensure that Ohioans receive the intended savings.

Ohio voters are sending a clear message that affordability matters. AARP's June 2026 Ohio voter survey found that rising prices and affordability are the leading issues influencing voters' decisions. Sixty percent of Ohio voters reported being worried about their personal financial situation, and 31 percent identified gasoline prices as one of their top two concerns related to rising costs.

For many older Ohioans, particularly those living on fixed incomes or in rural communities, driving is not a convenience, but a necessity. Reliable transportation is essential for reaching medical appointments, purchasing groceries and prescriptions, getting to work, fulfilling caregiving responsibilities, maintaining social connections, and remaining active in the community. As fuel costs rise, these expenses can place additional strain on already stretched household budgets. For older Ohioans living on fixed incomes, even

modest increase in transportation costs can create difficult choices among fuel, food, healthcare, and other essentials.

AARP Ohio appreciates the General Assembly's focus on the affordability pressures facing Ohioans and the provisions in SB 475 intended to protect transportation funding and ensure savings reach consumers. As lawmakers consider this temporary relief, we also encourage careful consideration of the broader implications of using General Revenue Fund resources and the need to protect other programs and services important to older Ohioans.

AARP Ohio looks forward to working with members of the General Assembly on policies that strengthen the financial security and quality of life of older Ohioans and their families Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 475.