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Written Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 117
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
May 11, 2021
Jason Smith, Associate State Director, AARP Ohio

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of AARP. As a nonpartisan, social mission organization representing individuals aged 50-plus with a national membership of 37 million and approximately 1.5 million members in Ohio, AARP was deeply concerned about the anti-consumer policies originally passed under House Bill 6 by the 133rd General Assembly. We would like to thank the bill sponsors, Senators Mark Romanchuk and Hearcel Craig, for advancing this proposal to finish the job by repealing and refunding monies collected under HB 6's anti-consumer subsidy for the Ohio Valley Electric Corporation (OVEC).

While we appreciate that the Ohio General Assembly recently passed House Bill 128 to address anti-consumer policies benefiting FirstEnergy Solutions, it did not go quite far enough in addressing all of the anti-consumer provisions contained in House Bill 6. We strongly urge legislators to finish the job by supporting Senate Bill 117 to repeal the subsidies granted to OVEC coal plants, including the one being subsidized by Ohio rate-payers located in Indiana. House Bill 128 was an important first step, but the General Assembly won't be entirely successful in reversing the anti-consumer, pro-bailout policies of House Bill 6 without repealing this outrageous tax benefitting OVEC.

Signing the House Bill 6 nuclear bailout bill into law was always bad for Ohio consumers, but the impact of COVID-19 has only made the choices many Ohioans have to make between paying for food, medicine, housing, and utilities even more dire. Any policy that raises utility bills, particularly while vulnerable Ohioans continue to struggle with challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, should consider this impact. The Ohio Legislative Service Commission estimates that \$78 million was collected from all ratepayer classes in 2020, which would be repealed under SB 117. We strongly believe that consumers, both individual and business ratepayers, should be protected from the further collection and immediately benefit from this refund, as proposed by Senate Bill 117.

We strongly urge passage of Senate Bill 117 to finish the job on repealing the anti-consumer subsidies passed into law by House Bill 6. Thank you for this opportunity to share our testimony supporting Senate Bill 117. Please feel free to contact AARP Ohio if you wish to further discuss our position.

Real Possibilities