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**Written Testimony on Senate Bill 58**  
**Senate Health Committee**  
**March 24, 2021**  
**Holly Holtzen, State Director, AARP Ohio**

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, 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. As you are aware, 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. We work to strengthen communities and fight for the issues that matter most to families, such as healthcare, employment, income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities, and financial abuse protection.

AARP is here today to express our support for Senate Bill 58. In Ohio, an estimated 1,480,000 family caregivers provide care and support of loved ones, uncompensated care valued at nearly \$16.8 billion. Many caregivers provide support in homes and communities, which is in line with the 76% of older Americans who report that they want to stay in their homes as they age.<sup>1</sup> However, a significant number of Ohioans are receiving care in a nursing facility, and S.B.58 will provide nursing home residents and their family members with the ability to install a video monitoring device in their room. This opportunity for electronic monitoring will help family caregivers remain connected with their loved ones and contribute by being a part of the resident's care team.

The National Council on Aging estimates that approximately 5.8 million caregivers in the U.S. (about 11% of all caregivers) are long-distance caregivers<sup>2</sup>, living at least an hour away from their loved one. Many have the same concerns and pressures local caregivers have — including high levels of emotional distress. They also tend to spend more of their own money on caregiving because they're more likely to need to hire help, take time off work (which may or may not be paid time off) and pay for expenses related to travel. The ability for a family caregiver to use a monitoring device will provide the caregiver peace of mind by providing another way to view and interact with a loved one receiving care in a nursing facility.

Specifically, this common-sense electronic monitoring legislation will:

- Provide families and their loved ones with an option to install a monitoring device in their loved one's room.
- Require the resident or resident's representative to notify the long-term care facility of the use of electronic monitoring.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/community/info-2018/2018-home-community-preference.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>

- Ensure the device's expense and any associated costs to install, operate, or maintain the device, is entirely the responsibility of the resident or the resident's representative.
- Require the Director of Health to prescribe a form for use by the resident seeking to authorize the use and installation of an electronic monitoring device in the resident's room.

The use of electronic monitoring by a nursing home resident and the loved ones of their choosing can help provide peace of mind, reduce social isolation, and identify and allow families to notify staff of concerns. This legislation will also help mitigate occurrences of elder abuse within nursing home settings in Ohio.

On behalf of AARP, I urge the committee to support this bill. Thank you for the chance to testify today.