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Senate Insurance Committee
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 220
September 22, 2021

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Hackett, Vice-Chair Romanchuk, Ranking Member Craig, and distinguished members of the Senate Insurance Committee. AARP is pleased to support Senate Bill 220. As you are aware, AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With 1.5 million members in Ohio, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, focusing on health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment.

People of all ages are skipping doses, splitting pills, and even not filling prescriptions because they can't afford their medication. That's because Americans pay three times what people in other countries pay for the same medicine. According to an AARP survey performed in June 2021, almost sixty percent of likely voters age 50 and older report that prescription drug prices are unreasonable, and many indicated they have had or will need to make trade-offs to afford their medication.¹ SB 220 sets an out-of-pocket limit of \$35 for a 30-day period supply of insulin. This proposal will make this life-essential drug more affordable and accessible.

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. All people with type 1 diabetes and many with type 2 diabetes require insulin to survive. Over 909,000 Ohio residents are living with diabetes.² From 2009 to 2019, the price of insulin has tripled even though there has been no change in the product.³ The result is that many people ration their doses or go without, often with deadly consequences.⁴

As this legislation will lead to people being able to afford life-saving medication, AARP Ohio urges this committee to pass SB 220.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly Holtzen".

Holly Holtzen, PhD
State Director, AARP Ohio

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2021/survey-voters-lower-drug-prices.html>

² AARP Public Policy Institute DataExplorer, 2018-2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

³ <https://www.businessinsider.com/insulin-price-increased-last-decade-chart-2019-9>

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/rise-patients-dying-rationing-insulin-u-n-tries-new-solution-n1083816>

