



February 16, 2006
Representative Morrison, Chair
House Health and Human Services Committee

Good afternoon Chairman Morrison and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Alyce Brown and I am the Southwest Regional Volunteer Coordinator for AARP. AARP Kansas represents the views of our more than 350,000 members in the state of Kansas. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support for HCR 5011 and caregivers of Kansas. Caregiving is a high priority issue for AARP Kansas.

Family caregivers refer to people who provide long-term care services and support to family members, friends, relatives and neighbors. Unpaid caregiver refers to people who provide care without pay.

In the 2004 AARP survey "Caregivers in the U.S., Spotlight on Kansas" it was estimated that approximately 446,000 adults in Kansas, 22 % of the total population, provide unpaid care to a relative or friend 18 or older.

These caregivers are a diverse group. Their caregiving experiences range from those that are relatively easy to those that are burdensome. We know that being a caregiver makes those who assume the heaviest responsibilities vulnerable to risk associated with poorer health, emotional stress and economic hardships.

As the baby boom generation ages over the next 25 years, the ranks of those needing care will swell and the numbers of those available to provide care will decrease. Future caregivers may feel even less choice about becoming caregiver or may provide care for two, three or more recipients. This will increase the caregiver burden.

AARP believes that unpaid caregivers deserve our attention and our assistance by:

- Helping current at-risk caregivers to continue to provide care to family without sacrificing their health, financial security and their quality of life.
- Expanding current caregiver programs to include all caregivers regardless of the age of care recipient.
- Encouraging families and states to begin to plan future needed services for the long-term care population.

As a step in recognizing the efforts of those who carry out the primary role of the unpaid caregiver, we respectfully request your support of HCR 5011 and Kansas caregivers. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully, Alyce Brown

I will stand for questions.

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