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April 4, 2023

Dear Members of the Iowa House Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of older Iowans, AARP Iowa would like to express our concern for the proposed modifications to public assistance programming as outlined in SF494.

Nearly 34,000 older Iowans receive SNAP benefits across the state. With sky-high grocery, drug and gas prices, older Iowans on a fixed income and their caregivers are facing the harsh reality that their income falls short of covering many of their basic needs.

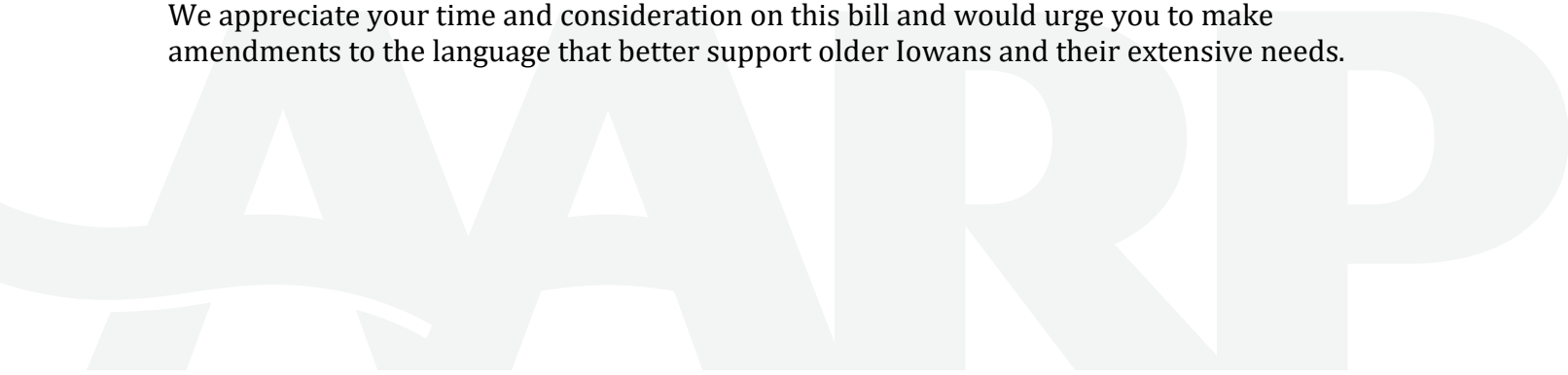
AARP believes all eligible Iowans should have access to public assistance programming when they need it and that obtaining this assistance should be straightforward and efficient. As written, SF494 creates unnecessary burdens on older Iowans and their caregivers looking to receive needed SNAP benefits.

The provisions outlined in SF494 to establish asset limits, in addition to the current income eligibility requirements to receive SNAP, creates additional bureaucratic hoops for seniors and caregivers to jump through in order to receive the assistance they need. In Iowa there are approximately 330,000 unpaid caregivers providing much needed care to loved ones. Many caregivers work part or even full time, while running errands, doing chores and fixing meals for older family members. Implementing the asset test proposed in SF494 could have unintended consequences for caregivers balancing multiple jobs and caring for their loved ones, resulting in a devastating financial burden for thousands of families across Iowa.

Today, only 36 percent of eligible older Iowans receive SNAP benefits – a 14-year low in Iowa. Rather than creating barriers we should be working to find ways to make life easier for older Iowans and our unpaid caregivers through tax credits, innovation and caregiver education.

AARP recognizes the importance of proper management of public funding and we believe existing laws adequately prevent fraud, waste and abuse within the SNAP program. We would be happy to work with the State of Iowa to assist in promoting the SNAP program, educating Iowans about how the program works and clarifying eligibility guidelines.

We appreciate your time and consideration on this bill and would urge you to make amendments to the language that better support older Iowans and their extensive needs.



Please feel free to reach out with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" being more prominent than the last name "Anderson".

Brad Anderson
AARP Iowa State Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paige Yontz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paige" being more prominent than the last name "Yontz".

Paige Yontz
AARP Iowa State Advocacy Manager