

Written by Ann Black
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Des Moines, April 12, 2012—AARP thanks the Iowa Senate for supporting Iowa’s largest workforce –Direct Care Workers, by funding and including language to professionalize Direct Care Workers in the Senate HHS Appropriations Budget, Senate File 2336.

“AARP thanks the members of the Iowa Senate who voted for improving and supporting Iowa’s largest skilled workforce so that Iowa is prepared to care,” said Kent Sovern, AARP Iowa State Director.

A task force made up of members of Iowa’s direct care workers as well as industry providers has spent more than two years developing the recommendations on how to better support Iowa’s Direct Care Workers. SF 2336 establishes core state standards for training, creates career pathways for advancement and specialization, and creates a Board to oversee these professional standards. Currently, Iowa has professional oversight boards and requires qualitative credentialing for all plumbers, hair stylists, massage therapists and a host of other occupations, but does not require a similar credentialing for all direct care workers.

“This most recent direct care support language passed in the Iowa Senate is the product of extensive negotiations and input from stakeholders in all corners of long term care,” said Sovern. “AARP commends the Iowa Senate for giving Iowa’s direct care workers the recognition and professional status they want and deserve, and for insisting upon minimum training standards for paid caregivers for various Iowans and in various long-term settings.”

With an estimated 73,000 direct care workers in Iowa, these paid caregivers make up the

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largest segment of Iowa's workforce. Moreover, demand for direct care services is high and growing. Iowa will need an additional 12,000 direct care workers by 2012. High turnover is a persistent challenge. This legislation elevates the profession by offering all Iowa's direct care workers portable training and credentials.

AARP hopes the Iowa's Representatives will also support this language and funding to continue to be a national leader in better serving Iowa's long-term care needs.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.