



2026

Legislative Agenda





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agenda

1. Prescription Drug Affordability
2. Caregiving
3. Financial Security
4. Livable Communities



1. Make medicine more affordable for Virginians

The cost of prescription drugs continues to skyrocket, making it harder for Virginians to afford the medicine they need. Meanwhile, the big drug manufacturers and middlemen are raking in record profits. It is long past time that Virginia addresses this issue. AARP Virginia strongly supports the passage of legislation that will:

Create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board with the power to set upper payment limits on certain high-cost medications. This legislation has passed the General Assembly the past two sessions with bipartisan support, only to then be vetoed. The bill would complement federal changes that allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices and bring those lower costs to Virginians who aren't enrolled in Medicare. According to a poll conducted in 2025, 84% of Virginians support the policy.

Increase transparency throughout the prescription drug supply chain and explore other opportunities to reduce consumer costs. There is no silver bullet to solve the drug affordability crisis, and while the manufacturers are the primary drivers of high costs, there is plenty of blame to go around. AARP Virginia has and will continue to explore any legislation that makes drug pricing more transparent and directly benefits Virginia consumers, such as bulk purchasing pools or regulations on Pharmacy Benefit Managers.



2. Support aging Virginians and their caregivers

More than 1.5 million Virginians serve as caregivers for loved ones, nearly a quarter of the adult population. They are the invisible backbone of our health system. The General Assembly should pass legislation that supports these family caregivers, improves institutional care and allows Virginians to remain at home as long as possible and to age with dignity. AARP Virginia supports legislation that will:

Institute paid family and medical leave for Virginia workers. Caring for a loved one comes with direct and indirect costs. Fifty-seven percent of Virginia's family caregivers work. Many have to take time away from their jobs without pay or stop working altogether, risking their own financial stability and health in the process.

Establish a home and community-based services presumptive eligibility program to streamline the Medicaid application process. Home care costs taxpayers about a third as much as institutional care. Allowing people to get coverage quickly can help avoid more harmful and expensive health outcomes, such as admission to a nursing home.

Ensure that nursing homes are providing quality care to residents. Understaffing, lack of accountability and prioritizing profits over people put the health of vulnerable Virginians in jeopardy. Our leaders must ensure that nursing homes have the staff they need to provide high-quality care and facilities that fail to do so are held accountable.

Codify the Uniform Health Care Decisions Act. This legislation would make incremental but necessary improvements to Virginia's current advanced care planning laws, which were written in 2009.



3. Safeguard the financial security of older Virginians

AARP Virginia fights to ensure that residents of the Commonwealth can choose how to live as they age. Protecting the financial security of older Virginians is critical to this mission. We will support policies that safeguard the livelihoods of older Virginians and legislation that will:

Regulate cryptocurrency kiosks or “crypto ATMs” that are often used to defraud older Virginians. These kiosks are almost entirely unregulated. Basic protections are needed to ensure they are registered with the state, have daily transaction limits, and warn customers about the potential for fraud.

Update the Virginia Human Rights Act to equalize age discrimination protections for older workers with other protected classes. The VHRA now covers unlawful firings on the basis of categories other than age by employers “employing more than five persons.” However, the VHRA only covers unlawful firings on the basis of age by employers “employing more than five persons but fewer than 20 persons”.

Increase the minimum monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit from \$23 to \$50. SNAP funding is currently under threat due to recent federal changes. While combatting these challenges, Virginia should commit additional funds to increase the monthly benefit, which is woefully inadequate.

Increase participation in Virginia’s RetirePath program by lowering the employee threshold from 25 to five. This program is critical for ensuring that workers without employer retirement benefits can save money for their lifetime financial security.



4. Make Virginia communities affordable for everyone

One of the greatest challenges facing Virginians of all ages is the rising cost of housing. From an 18-year-old renting their first apartment to a retiree with skyrocketing property taxes on a house they have lived in for decades, too many are struggling to make their payments. Every single Virginian should be able to keep a roof over their head. AARP Virginia supports policies that will:

Prevent evictions by extending the pay-or-quit period for renters from five to 14 days. Extending this period by just nine days greatly increases the likelihood of the window intersecting with a pay period, giving the tenant the ability to catch up on their rent and remain in their home.

Give localities the ability to negotiate affordable units for new assisted living developments. While the demand for assisted living units among low-income Virginians has increased, the supply has decreased. The Auxiliary Grant program provides support to residents, but falls far below the actual monthly costs. This bill would empower localities to use their negotiating power with developers to ensure that more affordable units are available for Virginians.

Ensure that the affordable housing supply meets demand. Virginia is a great place to live, work and retire. The General Assembly must explore all policy options that make more affordable housing available to those who need it in every Virginia locality.



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