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STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

We are all aging and deserve to grow older with dignity and in a state with adequate protections and resources for this important population. This is especially relevant given that older adults are now the fastest growing population in Texas, and in the Dallas area alone, they are growing at twice the rate of any other age group. This growth, coupled with the knowledge that 10,000 Baby Boomers will continue turning 65 every day through at least 2030, demands attention in the 88th State Legislative Session and requires public policy makers to be intentional in their legislative action. The following priorities are vital to the well-being of older Texans now and into the future.

Elder Financial Abuse Protections

Elder financial abuse is rampant in Texas and across the country. Older adults lose more than \$50 billion each year to frauds, scams, and exploitation, and for every reported case, 44 cases go unreported. Legislative action that holds perpetrators accountable and strengthens protections for vulnerable older adults is needed, including support for Adult Protective Services (APS) in the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Long-Term Care Facility Resident Protections

Texas consistently ranks as one of the worst states in the country when it comes to quality of care for long-term care facility residents. These vulnerable, isolated individuals deserve better treatment and protection at this stage of their lives. Covid-19 amplified many of the flaws in resident care, and there are opportunities in this legislative session to improve some of these issues and strengthen the care and protection of long-term care residents.

Housing

Older adults who rely on rental housing have seen an increase in housing costs. Dallas' year-over-year rent costs leads the state average of an 8.3% increase. Efforts supporting eviction legal aid and the Tenant Protection Act are vitally important in this legislative session.

Food Security for Older Adults

Food insecurity for older adults across the state has only increased since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. We should be making it easier for older Texans and those with disabilities in need to access SNAP benefits and meal programs like Meals on Wheels across the state.

Medicaid Expansion

Among the 50 states, Texas has the highest number and percentage of uninsured citizens. Medicaid Expansion would provide health insurance coverage for up to 1.5 million Texas citizens age 19-64, who earn less than 138% of the federal poverty level, at a \$90-\$10 federal funding match.

Contact Renae Perry at RPerry@TheSeniorSource.org with any questions.
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