



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
**In support of House Bill 5637**  
House Judiciary Committee  
May 8, 2025

Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and over 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for adding debit cards to the section of law relating to fraudulent use of credit cards, as House Bill 5637 from Representative Ackerman intends to do.

Fraud criminals steal billions of dollars from unsuspecting consumers every year. The impact on victims and their families can be financially and emotionally devastating, especially for older adults. The recent growth in fraud has been meteoric. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) revealed their estimates of under-reporting in a 2023 report, suggesting that rather than \$9 billion reported stolen through fraud in 2022, it was likely closer to \$137.4 billion.

A recent survey from AARP shows that 42% of adults — that's 141 million people - have had money or sensitive information stolen through fraud. Nine in ten US adults now believe fraud can happen to anyone – and the biggest worry they have about fraud is of it happening to them. When fraud does occur, law enforcement must be armed with laws that enable them to bring criminals to justice.

House Bill 5637 would add "debit cards" to the section of law relating to fraudulent use of credit cards. Currently, the state of Rhode Island does not treat fraud involving debit cards the same as it does fraud involving credit cards. Consumers should receive the same protection for fraudulent transactions whether a credit card or debit card is used in a crime.

AARP Rhode Island is dedicated to combating fraud and protecting Rhode Islanders. AARP volunteers travel the state educating people about the risks of fraud and our state office hosts regular fraud tele-townhalls. AARP Rhode Island supports House Bill 5637 because it provides consumers with more protection against fraud. We respectfully ask that you recommend passage on House Bill 5637. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Netto".

Matt Netto, AARP RI, Associate State Director - Advocacy  
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