



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island
In support of House Bill 8402
House Committee on Health and Human Services
April 28, 2026

Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 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 establishing the Permanent Joint Study Commission on Aging and Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, as Representative Carson's House Bill 8402 does.

House Bill 8402 would advance the interests of older Rhode Islanders by establishing the Permanent Joint Study Commission on Aging and Multi-Sector Plan on Aging. More than one in five Rhode Islanders is now over the age of 65, and that number is growing faster than almost anywhere else in the country. Over the next decade, we will see the greatest growth among residents aged 75 and older and 85 and older people who built our communities, raised families, served in our workforce, and deserve to age with dignity and security.

H8402 recognizes a simple truth:

Aging is not a niche issue, it touches housing, healthcare, transportation, economic security, and every city and town in this state.

Right now, too many aging-related decisions are made in silos. Housing policy is here. Transportation planning is there. Healthcare and municipal services are somewhere else entirely. Older adults are left trying to navigate systems that were never designed to work together.

H8402 creates a permanent, coordinated, and accountable structure to ensure Rhode Island is planning—not reacting—to the needs of its older residents.

The Multi-Sector Plan on Aging required by this bill brings together the agencies, municipalities, advocates, and older adults themselves to develop a shared roadmap across six critical areas: housing, transportation, access to services, municipal services, economic security, and healthcare.

That matters because aging well is not just about healthcare—it's about whether you can afford to stay in your home, get to a doctor's appointment, access food and services, or remain connected to your community.



A multisector plan for aging (MPA) is a state-led, cross-agency, multi-year planning process that convenes a broad range of public and private stakeholders to collaboratively address the needs of all people aging, including people with disabilities, and plan for aging into the future.¹

MPAs are distinct from other aging-related plans, such as state plans on aging, state health improvement plans, and Medicaid plans. MPAs often incorporate and elevate these other planning efforts yet go beyond the scope of these initiatives to bridge programs and resources from a wider range of agencies and stakeholders.

15 states have some form of Multi Sector Plan on Aging authorization from state leadership (e.g., executive order, legislation, or decree) to pursue an MPA.

Of these states:

- 8 are implementing (NC, OK*, PA, VT) or updating existing MPAs (CA, CO, MA, TX); and
- 7 are developing MPAs (MD, MO, MN, NY, TN, UT) or actively planning for development (IL).

• **23 states without authorization are taking action toward or are interested in an MPA.** Of these states:

- 9 are planning for or exploring authorization for an MPA (CT, IN, IA, ND, NH, NV, OR, RI, WA);
- 13 are aware of interest among state leadership (AL, AR, AZ, HI, ID, KS, KY, MS, MT, NE, NJ, OH, WI); and
- 19 foresee their state engaging in the MPA process within the next few years (AL, CT, GA, ID, IN, IA, KY, MS, MT, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NV, OH, OR, RI, WA, WI).

At its core, House Bill 8402 is about one thing: aging with dignity, choice, and independence. It is about making sure older Rhode Islanders can age in place if they choose. It is about making sure families and caregivers are supported. It is about ensuring our systems are ready—not overwhelmed.

We ask that you recommend passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Netto

Associate State Director-AARP Rhode Island

¹ <https://www.chcs.org/media/The-State-of-Multisector-Plans-for-Aging-in-2024.pdf>