



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
**In support of Senate Bill 2648**  
Senate Commerce Committee  
April 14, 2026

Chairman Britto and members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

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 expanding the definition of operator to anyone who enables customers to purchase virtual currency. Expands the definition of a transaction to include a digital product or application where payment is made in person or through a third-party intermediary, as Chairwoman Gu's Senate Bill 2648 does.

AARP has seen an alarming increase in criminals using cryptocurrency kiosks to steal Americans' hard-earned money. These machines - also known as "crypto ATMs," "bitcoin ATMs," "BTMs," or "virtual currency kiosks" - are increasingly common, appearing in supermarkets, convenience stores, gas stations, bars, and restaurants across our communities.

While cryptocurrency kiosks can be used for legitimate transactions, such as sending money to digital wallets, scammers are increasingly exploiting these machines to commit fraud. The way these scams work is that criminals - often impersonating government officials or trusted businesses - create a false sense of urgency and instruct individuals to withdraw large amounts of cash and deposit it into a crypto kiosk. That cash is then immediately transferred to a digital wallet controlled by the criminal.

The Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation to regulate Crypto ATM machines during the 2025 legislative session. These regulations included:

- Daily Transaction Limits
- Extensive disclosures prior to a transaction
- Refunds For Scam Victims
- Physical paper receipts with all information needed for a law enforcement investigation

To date, 24 states have passed legislation regulating Crypto ATMs. In 2025, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center logged 13,460 complaints involving crypto ATMs, with \$389 million in losses, a 58% increase in losses and a 23% rise in complaints from the year prior. Victims 60 years old and older accounted for \$257.4 million of those losses across 6,188 complaints.

In response to the regulation of the physical Crypto ATM machines the industry is starting to move towards a mobile first system that gives customers full control of cash to Bitcoin purchases without relying on kiosk hardware or legacy ATM networks. Crypto ATMs are being replaced with a platform that lets customers walk into thousands of real retail chain stores, deposit cash at the register, and



complete their Bitcoin purchase through their account on their phone. The device in their pocket becomes the new access point. This new mobile platform will not be held to the same requirements that physical Crypto ATMs are unless Chairwoman Gu's Senate Bill 2648 is passed.

Expanding the definition of a transaction to include a digital product or application where payment is made in person or through a third-party intermediary will protect Rhode Islanders from this new technology. It is important for our state to continue to combat fraud and scams as they evolve. We must ensure that Rhode Islanders are protected from criminals, whether using a physical kiosk or a mobile app.

AARP Rhode Island supports Senate Bill 2648 because it ensures that the important consumer protections that the legislature passed last session are not circumvented. We urge you to recommend passage on Senate Bill 2648.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Matthew Netto  
Associate State Director-AARP Rhode Island