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February 15, 2023

**To:** Chair Lislegard and members of the Property Tax Committee

**From:** Cathy McLeer, State Director

**Re: AARP Support for Property Tax Relief Bills (HF 700; HF 1506; HF 1323; HF 1422 and HF 1504)**

Dear Chair Lislegard and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our nearly 620,000 Minnesota members, AARP appreciates the attention paid to reducing property taxes for seniors, as housing costs can be the largest expense for older Minnesotans and directly affect day-to-day financial security.

Most older adults want to stay in their homes as long as possible, and challenges like housing costs can create financial uncertainty and put that possibility out of reach. Property tax continues to be among the most financially burdensome for low-income seniors on a fixed income and people with disabilities to absorb. As home values continue to spike, homeowners and renters alike need help to keep up with paying property taxes.

Overall, AARP believes circuit breakers, as envisioned in both Representative Lislegard's bill (**HF 1506**) and Representative Agbaje's bill (**HF 1323**), are among the most cost-effective approaches to property tax relief because they target assistance to households with the least ability to pay, rather than providing more expensive across-the-board relief to all taxpayers without regard to their payment capacity. Minnesota's Circuit Breaker Program is designed to provide relief to older homeowners who need it the most - those with low and moderate incomes.

Increasing the circuit breakers' maximum threshold and extending larger refunds would help ensure that older Minnesotans can continue to age in their own homes and communities. Similarly, this relief should be expanded to include property tax relief to renters through the Renters' Credit.



AARP also strongly supports Representative Youakim's targeted tax relief bill (**HF 700**), which provides relief to homeowners who have experienced a spike in their property taxes. This proposal will go a long way in helping retired seniors living on a fixed income who must pay other increasing expenses like medications, utilities, and groceries.

As we have testified, AARP supports Representative Wolgamatt's senior claimant and disability exemption bill (**HF 1422**), which will allow more seniors and people with disabilities to qualify for the Homestead Credit Refund and will increase their benefit amounts.

Finally, AARP supports Representative Norris' (**HF 1504**), which amends Minnesota's more traditional homestead exemption program to account for recent appreciation in residential property values in the state.

Together these bills will provide the chance for more of Minnesota's older residents to continue to age in their own homes and communities among family and friends, as well as offer an additional step toward remedying long-standing inequalities in the housing arena. If you have questions, please contact Mary Jo George, who is the Director of Advocacy at [mgeorge@aarpp.org](mailto:mgeorge@aarpp.org).

Thank you again for your time and attention to this critical issue for seniors.

