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SB 2012- Economic Assistance

House Appropriations- Human Resources Division

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Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations Human Resources Division, I am Janelle Moos, Associate State Director of Advocacy at AARP North Dakota. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with more than 83,000 members in North Dakota.

Our mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age. We wanted to take a moment to weigh in on a couple of important economic assistance issues. First, SNAP is an important program that ensures older adults and families get the nutrition needed. We have closely monitored the food crisis more Americans and North Dakotans faced during the pandemic. SNAP benefits are an important tool that addresses this crucial problem. It is an especially important program for Americans over 50 because many face challenges to employment, live on fixed incomes, live alone, and have limited financial resources to pay for necessities like food, housing, and essential medicine. To people struggling to put food on the table, hunger is not a political issue, it is a daily reality. SNAP is a vital lifeline that feeds nearly 24,000 North Dakota households. 35% of those recipients are either elderly or disabled. Participants generally spend their SNAP dollars locally, soon after receiving them, boosting local economies. An important benefit in this time.

Also, LIHEAP has served as a lifeline for low-income families. As you may know, AARP believe utility issues and rates are a key pocketbook issue. We have intervened in various cases in front of the North Dakota Public Service Commission on behalf of older adults and consumers and know the struggle of families to afford their utility payments. Having a safety net for families especially in our climate is the right thing to do. We encourage you to continue to support these programs to ensure no North Dakotan goes hungry or without heating or cooling

assistance when they need it. Again, we appreciate the time to raise issues important to North Dakotans 50+.

Thank you.