Nov. 12, 2026 / FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Flaherty, Communications Director
Office 608/ 286-6308 – Cell 608/ 698-0928, jflaherty@aarp.org

AARP Wisconsin marks National Family Caregivers Month with call for financial relief

New AARP research shows caregiving costs have increased 60% in five years

MADISON, WI – As Wisconsin recognizes National Family Caregivers Month this November, AARP Wisconsin is calling on state lawmakers to support the more than 1 million family caregivers who help older parents, spouses, and other loved ones live independently at home.

New AARP research shows that out-of-pocket costs for family caregivers increased by 60% over five years. AARP Wisconsin is urging lawmakers to create a state tax credit to provide family caregivers with meaningful financial relief.

The 2026 Caregiving Out-of-Pocket Costs Study found that family caregivers nationwide spend an average of $11,508 each year on caregiving expenses, up from $7,242 in 2021. Those costs now consume an average of 31% of caregivers' annual household income.

For many caregivers, those mounting costs are forcing difficult financial choices. Caregivers who borrowed money or took out loans to cover expenses spend an average of $16,580 annually on caregiving, equal to 50% of their household income. Those who tapped retirement savings spend even more, averaging $17,907 a year, or 49% of household income.

"Family caregivers make extraordinary sacrifices every day to help the people they love continue living safely and independently at home, often while raising families

and holding down jobs," said **Raj Shukla, AARP Wisconsin State Director**. "National Family Caregivers Month is an opportunity to say thank you, but gratitude alone does not pay the bills. When lawmakers return to Madison in January, we must provide meaningful financial relief to the people helping hold Wisconsin's long-term care system together."

AARP Wisconsin Calls for Caregiver Tax Credit

In Wisconsin, more than 1 million unpaid family caregivers provide approximately 560 million hours of care each year, valued at $11.1 billion annually.

AARP Wisconsin is urging lawmakers to establish a Family Caregiver Tax Credit that would provide eligible caregivers with up to $1,000 in relief for uncompensated out-of-pocket caregiving expenses. Qualified expenses would include home modifications, durable medical equipment, respite care, transportation, assistive technology, adult day care, and direct care workers.

The proposal has strong public support. Eighty-six percent of Wisconsin residents age 45 and older support providing family caregivers with a tax credit, while ninety-two percent say services that allow people to age in place are extremely or very important. Survey data compiled by AARP from NORC's Civic Health & Elections Project following the 2026 Midterm election found that nearly half (47%) of all Wisconsin voters say supporting unpaid family caregivers should be a priority for elected officials.

"Family caregivers aren't just helping the people they love. They are providing billions of dollars in unpaid care that our health and long-term care systems simply cannot replace," **Shukla** said. "A caregiver tax credit is a practical, commonsense way for Wisconsin to give something back to the people who give so much."

###

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www. aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP VIVA, a bilingual news source. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.