SBARE
NDSU Dept. 7520
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Chair Peltier and SBARE members-

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on the critical needs from SBARE and concepts for solutions. We appreciate the chance to share our ideas.

First, as you may know, as State Director of AARP in North Dakota, I had the opportunity to sit in on the NDSU Extension Services review process. You are to be complimented in your effort to review the Extension Service, its operations, it staffing, and its services. It was a learning experience that I believe will provide value to you as SBARE and the Extension Service as a whole. The recommendations from that review should be implemented to update NDSU Extension.

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50+ to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members in the United States, including 87,000 here in North Dakota, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on family caregivers, retirement and financial security, fraud prevention, and personal fulfillment.

The AARP North Dakota State Office interacts with NDSU Extension (Extension) fairly regularly. The research and programming the family and consumer sciences and community vitality sections provide are a benefit to North Dakota’s 50+ and should be continued. Specifically, AARP North Dakota has been working on improving supports for North Dakota’s 62,100 family caregivers, individuals who provide support to help loved ones remain safe and independent at home.

Part of our caregiver supports effort includes working with Extension to expand the Powerful Tools for Caregivers (Powerful Tools) program. Powerful Tools is an evidence-based program that seeks to help caregivers take better care of themselves. The programs is six weeks long, and in the process, participants learn about reducing stress, improving self-confidence, better communicating feelings, balancing their lives, increasing their ability to make tough decisions and locating resources. Programs like Powerful Tools benefit family caregivers, the loved ones they care for and the communities where they live.

To further illustrate how NDSU Extension expands its reach through collaboration, we recently held four workshops on family caregiver resources with over 500 attendees across the four events. At each of those events, NDSU Extension provided local agents or contacts to talk about Powerful Tools, find
attendees, and recruit potential trainers. The attendees at our events were those providing care or recently provided family caregiving supports. Watching the interaction after the events, the extension agents were finding plenty of interested individuals. Unfortunately, Extension to date has been unable to provide this training across North Dakota because of funding limitations. In addition to the benefits noted above, it is also cost effective when you consider the 62,100 North Dakota family caregivers provide an estimated 58 million hours of uncompensated care, saving the state an estimated $860 million on long-term care expenses a year.¹

**Powerful Tools** is one example of the work Extension's Family and Consumer Science's section provides to benefit North Dakotan's 50+. The continued work they do reduced older adult falls, which is the number one reason elderly individuals have to leave home. The *Stepping On* program has proven to be successful as the latest report from Extension shows 79 percent of those in the program reduced fall hazards at home.²

Further, AARP partnered with Extension in Morton County to do a program on nutrition education and helping adults 50+ learn new healthy cooking techniques using local foods. The *Cooking for Two* class aided people in meal planning, preparation, nutrition, and storage techniques, especially for two people. It garnered almost 50 attendees and we plan to repeat it in 2018.

Additionally, more and more North Dakotans are finding themselves ill prepared as they approach retirement. Extension has taken a lead in designing programming that encourages North Dakota farm and ranch families to sit down as a family and discuss succession planning, including how those running the operation will retire. While we have not personally seen nor experienced this program, AARP believes in encouraging individuals to plan and prepare for retirement. Programs that encourage retirement readiness should be enhanced and encouraged.

Last, as I mentioned it was a pleasure to serve as part of the committee that took a deep dive on the services and work Extension provides in North Dakota. From our work with them, it is clear they are working towards achieving "transformational education experiences." They continually work to find out what rural communities need and look to collaborate their expertise, research and delivery methods with the professionals or community members on the ground to deliver impact. The work they do is value added, not duplicative. We appreciate what they do for North Dakotans 50+ and look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Josh Askvig, State Director
AARP North Dakota
