



## Statewide Caregiver Support Webinar Advocacy Updates 1-23-24

### Advocacy Alert: Healthy Aging Grants

Last week, the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care held a hearing on [AB 418](#) related to Healthy Aging Grants. This bill directs the state Department of Health Services to allocate as a grant \$378,000 in each fiscal year of the 2023-25 fiscal biennium to a private, nonprofit entity (such as the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging) that conducts certain activities related to healthy aging. These activities include coordinating the implementation of evidence-based health promotion programs to support healthy aging; serving as a statewide clearinghouse for evidence-based falls injury, disease prevention, self-management of chronic health diseases, and health promotion programs; providing training and technical assistance to the staff of county departments, administering agencies, and other providers of services to aging populations; and collecting and disseminating information on falls injury, disease prevention, and health promotion in healthy aging populations.

**Take Action:** Ask your state legislators to support AB 418/SB 407 relating to Healthy Aging Grants and to sign on as a co-sponsor!

To find contact information for your state legislators type your home address in the white search box in the top right-hand corner of [this page](#) and hit "enter."

### Why is this bill important to watch?

- Provides investment in evidence-based prevention programs that support older adults at the local county and tribal level
- Helps train facilitators who can guide Stepping On, Walk with Ease and other vital workshops
- Falls are a top reason why folks end up in long-term care facilities-falls can be prevented and healthy aging grants are one way to do so.

See the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's Healthy Aging Grant [Issue Brief](#) for more information.

Evidence-based wellness programs are severely underfunded at the State and Federal level. This bill provides an opportunity to advocate for life-saving, life-changing programming for older Wisconsinites.

Late last year, the Senate version of this legislation was unanimously recommended for passage by the Senate Committee on Health. We hope to see this legislation on the agenda for a full Senate vote soon.



## Other State Legislation

**AB 556** - Expediting criminal proceedings when a victim or witness is an elder person and preserving the testimony of a crime victim or witness who is an elder person. The Assembly Judiciary Committee scheduled a **public hearing on 1-11-23**. A public hearing has already taken place in the Senate committee. GWAAR supports this legislation.

**SB 593** - Absentee voting in certain residential care facilities and retirement homes and court determinations of incompetency and ineligibility to vote. The Senate Shared Revenue, Elections and Consumer Protection Committee scheduled an **Executive Session to vote on this legislation on 1-11-24**. The full Assembly previously passed an amended version of this legislation. GWAAR is registered as “other” on this legislation, as we support certain components of the bill and oppose others.

**AB 653** – Surrogate Decision-Making. The Assembly Committee on Family Law scheduled a **public hearing on this bill on 1-11-24**. GWAAR is not yet registered on this bill but will be registering in “opposition” of the bill as amended.

**AB 736** – Establishing a Palliative Care Council. The Assembly’s Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Committee scheduled a **public hearing on this bill on 1-10-24**. GWAAR supports this legislation and encourages the inclusion of additional council members to include all stakeholders related to serious illness care.

**SB 856** - Specialized Transportation Assistance Pilot. Introduced on 12-26-23. GWAAR has not yet registered on this bill but will be registering as “other” on the bill. **A public hearing has been scheduled on this bill tomorrow**. We support efforts to improve transportation coordination and have questions and concerns related to parts of this legislation, including the lack of funding to support implementation of the pilot.

**SB 887** - Absentee voting in certain residential care facilities and retirement homes. Introduced on 1-05-24. GWAAR is opposed to this legislation as it violates voters in care facilities rights to vote privately.

## Federal Update:

### **Federal Budget – New Continuing Resolution Keeps Government Funded**

Last Fri., President Biden signed a short-term spending bill (Continuing Resolution or CR), to keep the federal government funded into early March. One day earlier, Congress approved the CR, buying themselves more time to complete the formal process for all 12 spending bills.



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The new CR keeps four appropriations bills funded (at FY 2023 levels) until March 1, 2024, and keeps the other eight appropriations bills (including the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill funding Older Americans Act and other aging services) funded until March 8, 2024. This is the third short-term spending bill Congress has approved to keep the federal government operating since the federal fiscal year 2024 began on Oct. 1, 2023.

The shorter-term CR give us **7 more weeks** to communicate to [Wisconsin Members of Congress](#) that we need them to protect Older Americans Act programs from cuts and increase the funding to help us address local needs.

