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AARP Statement on Passage of Budget Control Act of 2011

WASHINGTON—AARP CEO A. Barry Rand offered the following statement after the House and Senate passed the Budget Control Act of 2011 to raise the debt ceiling. Throughout the past several months, AARP has been focused on preventing cuts to Social Security and Medicare benefits for the millions of beneficiaries who have paid into the systems over their working lives:

“We are relieved that Congress has acted on a bipartisan agreement to address the debt ceiling and prevent default to ensure that seniors will continue to receive their Social Security checks and have access to health care. We are also gratified that after hearing from millions of AARP members, the President and Congress did not cut Social Security, Medicare and long-term care in the first round of deficit reduction.

“Going forward, we are pleased that Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare benefits are protected if the so-called “super committee” fails to reach an agreement later this fall, but we will remain vigilant in our efforts to protect the health and retirement security of seniors and future retirees. We are concerned that a fast-track committee process will deny Americans a voice in the discussion about critical tax, health and retirement issues. We also are concerned about the potential use of a trigger that would arbitrarily cut provider payments under Medicare, which could unfairly shift costs to seniors.

“Seniors have worked their entire lives to achieve a level of health and economic security in retirement. As the deficit debate continues, AARP will continue to impress upon Congress the need to protect Medicare and Social Security from harmful cuts. With the compounded effect of loss of retirement savings and home equity, high unemployment and rising health care costs, cuts to the benefits seniors have earned could undermine the standard of living of not just those with limited incomes, but middle class seniors who have median incomes of only \$18,500.

“AARP will continue to raise the voices of millions of Americans who rely on their Social Security and Medicare benefits and oppose benefit cuts for deficit reduction. Americans want a broader conversation around health and economic security, not one focused solely on deficit reduction.

“AARP believes that the American public deserves a seat at the table in any forum, including the newly created super committee, that discusses potential changes to these critical programs. We believe that our nation’s leaders should work together to strengthen health and retirement security for current and future generations.”

For more information, please contact AARP Media Relations at (202) 434-2560 or visit www.aarp.org/protectseniors.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. 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. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.