

Assoc. Cites Need to Counter Highest Electric Rates in Continental U.S., Says Budget Support for Caregivers Will Save Taxpayers Medicaid \$\$

Statement by Beth Finkel, State Director for AARP in New York State

ALBANY, N.Y., Jan. 19, 2014

/PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- "Governor Cuomo has a chance to provide relief to the kitchen table economies of New York's

most powerful voting demographic, the 50+, in his 2014-15 Executive Budget through smart investments that will protect consumers and help tackle a key Baby Boomer issue: caring for elderly loved ones.

"New Yorkers pay the second highest utility bills in the nation and they need relief - now. Ensuring they have a voice at the table when utility companies press for even higher rates is key to protect and represent consumers' best interests. Utility companies have the money, power and influence to increase rates; consumers need an independent utility advocate in their corner. [An AARP study just detailed why consumers are losing the utility game in New York, and AARP believes it's time to change the game](#)

"The Empire State is one of just ten states across the nation lacking an independent consumer utility advocate, and it shows. Other states save their ratepayers literally hundreds of dollars for

every dollar their advocate offices cost. Utility rates in New York are out-of-control - electric bills 56 percent above the national average – and more than twice as high in New York City

and

Westchester County

. The Governor can change this by following his own

[Moreland Commission Report on Utility Storm Preparation and Performance](#)

(pgs. 44-46). AARP is urging he and the legislature to do so this year.

"Across New York, Boomers are struggling, as they work, raise families and care for elderly loved ones. The issue is set to escalate from crisis to disaster as a looming demographic shift means those caring for loved ones today may have no one to care for them tomorrow. New York

ranks

[a dismal 48](#)

[th](#)

[in the nation in providing caregiving supports](#)

. With a smart investment,

New York State

can change course in a way that helps people age in the community, with their loved ones, and saves the state money.

"AARP urges the Governor to include [\\$26 million to provide in-home services for the elderly to all 7,000 New Yorkers now on waiting lists](#) . These

services provide caregivers needed respite while allowing our frail elderly to live independently at home – rather than in much more costly nursing homes funded mainly by taxpayers through Medicaid.

"We also support \$10 million - from a nearly \$600 million federal grant to help more frail elderly age in community settings – to launch a navigator that would steer caregivers to the right services so they're able to look after their aging loved ones at home.

"AARP stands ready to work with the Governor and the Legislature on these common sense measures. Together, we can make New York a better place to live, work and age for all generations."

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