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SeniorLAW Center and AARP to Leverage Pro Bono Legal Services to Improve Lives of Older Pennsylvanians

Former PA Secretary of Aging Leads Innovative Partnership

PHILADELPHIA, PA— AARP Pennsylvania and Philadelphia’s SeniorLAW Center today announced a new partnership that will use the power of the city’s most prominent law firms to advocate for issues impacting the lives of older adults.

The **Pro Bono Action for Community Impact in Pennsylvania**, a SeniorLAW Center and AARP Partnership, will leverage pro bono partnerships with law firms to fight for policy changes that expand legal protections and resources for seniors and raise the visibility of issues important to older adults. The partnership will be led by former Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging Nora Dowd Eisenhower, who will serve as project director.

“This unique approach taps into an underutilized resource—engaging large law firms on a pro bono basis to tackle systemic issues among older adults through research, consumer education, litigation and public policy development,” said Dowd Eisenhower. “We anticipate that this project will identify ways to reduce homelessness, abuse and exploitation of older adults, increase seniors’ financial security and strengthen intergenerational families.”

The **Pro Bono Action for Community Impact in Pennsylvania** will build on AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly’s (LCE) Systemic Reform Project. For 43 years, LCE has provided free legal and social work services for D.C. seniors most in need both on an individual and systemic level. This is the first this systemic model will be replicated.

“AARP’s Legal Counsel for the Elderly has been instrumental in providing much-needed services for some of Washington’s most vulnerable residents,” said Kristin Dillon, AARP Senior Vice President, State and Community Engagement. “At AARP, we are very pleased to expand this crucial work to Pennsylvania and partner with the SeniorLAW Center to build on AARP’s efforts to improve the lives of older adults throughout the state.”

The collaboration also builds on a strong relationship between AARP and SeniorLAW Center spanning several decades. The two organizations have previously worked on advocacy issues ranging from voting rights, grandparents' rights and funding for home and community-based programs to preventing elder abuse, financial exploitation and senior poverty.

“This agreement represents an exciting new opportunity for pro bono lawyers to work with us to make lasting changes that improve the lives of thousands of our state’s older residents, including senior veterans, elder abuse victims and grandparents, far too many of whom face poverty or other devastating challenges every day,” said Karen Buck Esq., Executive Director, SeniorLAW Center.

The appointment of previous Secretary of Aging Nora Dowd Eisenhower to lead the project was also praised by former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell.

“Nora has been one of Pennsylvania’s foremost advocates for the rights of older people,” said Rendell. “She did a great job when she served as my Secretary of Aging, and she will continue to create solutions to improve lives and our communities.”

With almost 40 years of experience representing, educating and advocating for older adults in Pennsylvania, SeniorLAW Center is the only non-profit public interest law firm in Pennsylvania focused exclusively on protecting the legal rights of seniors. Not surprisingly, SeniorLAW Center is also well connected to Philadelphia’s legal community. Volunteers from the region’s most influential law firms currently participate in the Center’s senior issue practice groups or community partner teams—including many leaders from the city’s multicultural communities.

Issues like senior poverty, homelessness, elder abuse, fraud, financial exploitation, loss of health care and income supports pose devastating challenges to older adults in Philadelphia and statewide. Pennsylvania’s demographics demonstrate the need for focused senior legal advocacy work. The state is home to the nation’s fourth-oldest population, and the city of Philadelphia includes both the largest percentage of seniors and poorest overall population among the nation’s 10 largest cities.

“This initiative greatly expands AARP’s reach and impact in the senior advocacy and legal communities,” said AARP Pennsylvania State Director Bill Johnston-Walsh. “We look forward to working with SeniorLAW Center to identify projects that improve the health and welfare of older adults and help make communities more livable for all ages.”

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About AARP

AARP has 1.8 million members in Pennsylvania. Follow AARP Pennsylvania on Facebook @AARPPA and on Twitter @AARPPA.

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal

fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

About SeniorLAW Center

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2018, SeniorLAW Center has provided free legal representation, education and advocacy for over 400,000 seniors since its founding, focusing on the most vital and recurring legal problems facing older Americans: poverty, housing, elder abuse, financial exploitation, consumer protection, kinship care, and health and financial life planning needs. Based in center city Philadelphia with offices in Montgomery and Delaware Counties and additional offices opening soon, SeniorLAW Center's staff of attorneys and advocates and corps of pro bono partners seek access to justice for thousands of diverse seniors in need each year. Through its Pennsylvania SeniorLAW HelpLine, SeniorLAW Center also provides free legal advice, information and advocacy for seniors in all 67 Pennsylvania counties and advocates for long-term solutions to the needs of older people and their families. You can learn more at www.seniorlawcenter.org