



Ohio Association of  
Area Agencies on Aging

250 East Broad Street, Suite 220  
Columbus, OH 43215  
(614) 481-3511  
www.ohioaging.org

Kelsey Bergfeld, Chief Policy Officer  
bergfeld@ohioaging.org

## TESTIMONY TO OHIO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE HOUSE BILL 279

Kelsey Bergfeld, Chief Policy Officer, bergfeld@ohioaging.org  
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a)  
May 20, 2026

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a) in support of House Bill 279, which would create a nonrefundable income tax credit for family caregiving expenses.

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging represents the state's twelve Area Agencies on Aging, which coordinate and deliver vital services that help older Ohioans remain safe, healthy, and independent in their homes and communities. Every day, our agencies work with older adults, their families and caregivers in navigating the complexities of long-term care and the financial realities that come with it.

Older adults overwhelmingly want to age in place, with their family, friends, and community connections. However, long-term care services are often financially out of reach, and few older adults can afford long-term care insurance coverage. While Ohio operates several Medicaid home- and community-based service waivers that help eligible older adults remain at home, nearly nine in ten older Ohioans do not qualify for Medicaid.<sup>1</sup>

Outside of Medicaid, the primary programs supporting older Ohioans aging in place are the federally funded Older Americans Act and Ohio's Senior Community Services Program, which serves as the state match for Older Americans Act services. Administered through the Area Agencies on Aging, these programs provide lower-cost, preventative supports that help delay or avoid the need for more expensive Medicaid services and nursing facility placement. These services are highly effective, but funding has not kept pace with increasing need for assistance.

As a result, family caregivers have become an integral part of Ohio's long-term care system. More than two million Ohioans provide unpaid care to older adults and individuals with disabilities,

---

<sup>1</sup> [Ohio Department of Aging and Scripps Gerontology Center: Home and Community-Based Services in Ohio: 1993-2023.](#)

helping loved ones remain safe and independent at home.<sup>2</sup> Caregiving responsibilities are becoming increasingly intensive, with more caregivers performing complex medical and nursing-related tasks traditionally handled by trained professionals. On average, family caregivers provide 27 hours of care each week, and more than half now perform medical or nursing tasks as part of their caregiving responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

Caregivers help make it possible for older adults to remain in their homes and communities, often while balancing work, finances, and family responsibilities. Many pay out of pocket for home modifications, transportation, respite care, medical supplies, assistive technology, and in-home support. For many families, these expenses can quickly become overwhelming.

House Bill 279 recognizes the economic value of family caregivers in Ohio. By helping offset caregiving-related expenses, this tax credit would provide meaningful relief to families while reinforcing Ohio's broader goal of helping older adults age safely and independently in their homes and communities.

As Ohio's population continues to age, supporting family caregivers must remain a policy priority. Investments in caregivers are investments in stronger families, healthier communities, and a more sustainable long-term care system.

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging respectfully urges your support for House Bill 279.

---

<sup>2</sup> [AARP: Valuing the Invaluable 2026: Family Caregivers' Contribution Reaches \\$1 Trillion.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving: Caregiving in the US 2025](#)