



Divided We Fail

...together we can do anything

It's a big year for AARP. That's because 2008 is AARP's 50th anniversary year. And from the very beginning, AARP held the strong belief that all Americans should have access to affordable, quality health care and peace of mind about their lifetime financial security.

At one time, many of us could count on our employers, the government, even each other, for financial security and health care. But times have changed. Today, the burden of saving for retirement, paying for health care, and supporting aging parents or struggling children is falling squarely on individuals.

Today in America, we've reached a tipping point. For the first time in the history of public opinion polls, a majority of Americans are saying they're concerned the next generation – our children -- may well be worse off than their parents.

Last year, AARP launched Divided We Fail – the biggest undertaking in its 50-year history. It's a national effort designed to engage the American people, businesses, interest groups, non-profit organizations and elected officials in finding bi-partisan solutions to ensure affordable, quality health care and long-term financial security – for Americans of all ages -- everyone.

AARP launched this major, long-term, public outreach effort in conjunction with the Business Roundtable – an association of CEO's from the largest companies in the nation, and the Service Employees International Union – SEIU – the fastest growing union in North America. We were joined later by the National Federation of Independent Business – NFIB – the nation's leading small business advocacy association. Today over 80 organizations have signed on in support of Divided We Fail.

We named the initiative Divided We Fail to symbolize the fact that individuals, business and government all have a role and a responsibility in securing health care and life-time financial security, and that everyone must work together to create solutions that will benefit all generations.

At the Divided We Fail launch, AARP's CEO Bill Novelli said, "We are here today to put political leaders on notice that Divided We Fail's joint membership – representing over 50 million Americans – is demanding action on critical domestic issues. We all agree the health and long-term financial security crisis in America needs to be addressed by our political leaders -- and these individuals need to be held accountable for taking these issues on."

A major focus of our efforts has been to get people to sign our pledge cards in support of our initiative, and to ask people to share their stories – their experiences and concerns regarding health and financial security. When you sign a pledge card or tell your story, you are making your voice heard. Please visit our website, www.dividedwefail.org and take action.

The idea is to take these stories and pledge cards to state capitols, to the halls of Congress and to the Oval Office. We'll

Through Divided We Fail, AARP has outlined an ambitious platform for health and financial security. It boils down to this:

1. Providing access to affordable healthcare coverage, including prescription drugs, without burdening future generations with these costs;
2. Providing for a secure retirement by strengthening Social Security, and encouraging personal savings and effective retirement plans;
3. Giving people tools to manage their finances and ensuring that people of all ages can continue to work and contribute; and
4. Providing choice when it comes to long-term care, so people can maintain their independence at home or in their communities.

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take them to corporate board rooms across America. They'll become part of our national discussion.

The responses have been overwhelming. To date, AARP has collected over a half-million pledges and stories. Over half of the Members of Congress have signed the pledge or have sent us a letter of support. In North Carolina AARP members and others have signed thousands of pledge cards and told hundreds of their stories. North Carolina ranks 17th in pledge cards and 9th in story collection among all the states and territories.

More than 80 organizations have signed on with Divided We Fail -- groups representing various fields of health care and financial security, as well as groups representing women, diverse populations, aging, and faith-based organizations. And we've engaged more than 5,000 volunteers. This is a great beginning -- but it is only the beginning!

Divided We Fail's top priority in 2008 is to get the presidential nominees to spell out their approaches to fixing health and financial security and to pledge to take action to put aside partisan gridlock and work together to find and enact solutions. The American people deserve a vigorous debate and concrete commitments to give the next President a mandate for action.

Much of our effort this year is devoted to educating the public about the various options to address health care and financial security, along with the trade-offs that accompany each of them. Again in North Carolina the state office has held several Community Conversations, forums and several Community Blitzes are planned.

After Election Day, we're going to go all out to hold the next President and Congress accountable for promises made to deliver meaningful and bi-partisan solutions to America's health care and financial security challenges.

Remember, visit our website, www.dividedwefail.org and encourage your family and friends to do the same. Please share your ideas and stories, and take our pledge. We need your help to get the changes we need.

Divided We Fail is not about, "Can we afford to grow older?" Of course, we can. It's about examining the quality of life in the wealthiest nation in the world, and saying, "We can do much better." Divided We Fail is a lengthy journey, not a weekend getaway. There will be tough challenges along the way. But as our logo says, "AARP, the power to make it better." Divided We Fail, together, we can do anything.

- AARP National Office Divided We Fail materials 2008

**We have a new
state office address:**

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**THE CANDIDATES
ARE PLEDGING TO FIX
HEALTH CARE AND
FINANCIAL SECURITY.**

**AND WE'RE PLEDGING
TO MAKE SURE THEY DO.**

This election year, it seems that each candidate is talking about "working together" and the need for "change" to solve our nation's health care and financial security problems.

But a funny thing often happens once the voting is over. Promises are forgotten and problems go unresolved. We can't afford to let that happen again.

That's why Divided We Fail will be watching after the elections, holding our elected leaders accountable and demanding that they work together to end the gridlock standing in the way of affordable health care and financial security for all.

Join us in ensuring that change is more than an empty promise.
Visit DividedWeFail.org.

