



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MA4 Opposes Plan To Cut \$42 Million From Key Senior Program**

**Jefferson City, MO** – On January 23, the Missouri State Senate gave preliminary consideration to SB 567 (and the Senate Committee substitute for the bill, SCS 567), a proposal that would end the use of the low-income renters' tax credit program for more than 60,000 Missourians and would cut benefits for an additional 55,000 senior Missourians who rely on the program to help offset basic monthly expenses. The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) and seniors from around the state are opposed to any further cuts in the program and will oppose efforts to radically change eligibility requirements for those currently receiving tax-credit benefits through the program.

"This new proposal makes deep cuts in a program important to our senior population; provides no guarantees that the Circuit Breaker program would receive *any* funding in the new budget year; excludes or restricts more than 100,000 Missourians from benefits; and changes the trajectory for the bipartisan effort to give Missouri seniors priority in the budget discussion that we saw last year," said Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4).

The original program, most commonly referred to as the "Circuit Breaker" tax credit program, was designed to help people live independently and in safe surroundings, particularly those individuals who are in a fixed-income or limited-income financial situation. In 2017, the Missouri General Assembly passed a bipartisan bill that would have protected this program from further cuts and would have provided continued funding for senior programs. That bill was vetoed by Missouri Governor Greitens in the summer of 2017. This specific program has remained in limbo since that time.

"It was clear from yesterday's Senate debate that our legislature is willing to consider measures that will protect our senior population while continuing to be financially responsible," said Edwards, "and we applaud the individual Senators who made that point on the Senate floor." "As one Senator noted, 'at the end of the day, this new bill simply means that seniors in Missouri will have \$42 million less in their pockets than they did last year'. The wholesale elimination of 100,000 people from a needed program is the wrong course of action. We cannot continue to pit one group against another and wait to see who loses the most. MA4 strongly opposes this bill and supports the efforts of legislators who are willing to re-evaluate this current legislative proposal. We will be happy to engage our elected officials as they make the senior population a priority in Missouri," said Edwards.

For more information, contact Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of MA4, at [cedwards@ma4web.org](mailto:cedwards@ma4web.org).

## **About The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4)**

The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) was founded in 1973 to serve as a statewide advocate and resource for older Missourians. MA4 is comprised of the state's 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which were created under the 1973 amendments to the Older American's Act of 1965. For 45 years, these local agencies have been providing vital services, programs and information to millions of Missourians and their caregivers, including legal services, home-delivered meals, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, public benefits counseling, senior center services and activities and in-home services. The 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide a coordinated network of care in implementing statewide initiatives, which are designed to help older Missourians maintain their independence and give them a voice in articulating their concerns and changing needs.

As the official statewide association of these agencies, MA4 is dedicated to carrying out its mission of service, information and advocacy to improve the lives of older Missourians and to plan for the changes that will take place as the aging population grows in number and importance in the next decade.

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