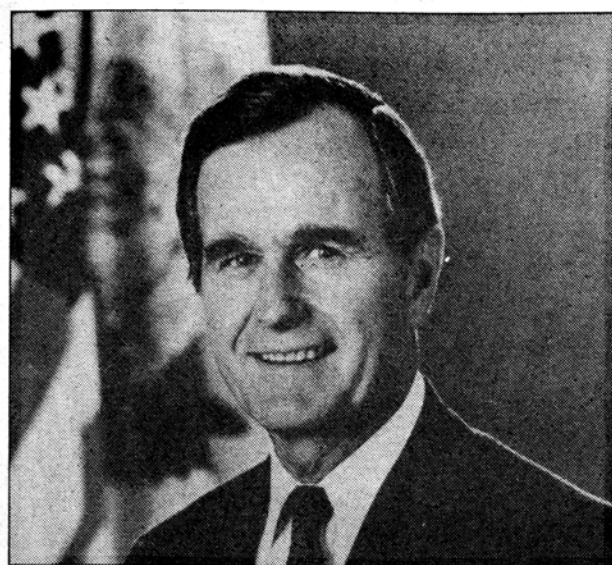


AGING ISSUES & PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN '88

by Herbert P. Weiss



George Bush photo courtesy press office

In 1900, when William McKinley was President of the United States, less than one in ten Americans was age 65 and over. By 1986, well into Ronald Regan's second term as President, one in five Americans was at least 55 years old and one in eight was at least 65. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and other aging advocacy groups hope that a graying of America's population will make a difference in the way "senior" issues are debated prior to the November, 1988 election.

Where is this campaign?

As this article goes to press, there is little time before election day (November 8, 1988). Presidential candidates, George Bush and Michael Dukakis, discuss issues surrounding defense, environment, and the economy. Debate on aging issues has been minimal at best. The campaign seems instead to have focused negatively on the candidates' family wealth, income, military records, and levels of patriotism.

What issues can be identified?

Through the efforts of AARP's nonpartisan voter education campaign program, both Bush and Dukakis's positions on aging related issues have been compiled from statements and speeches made between November '87 and May '88.

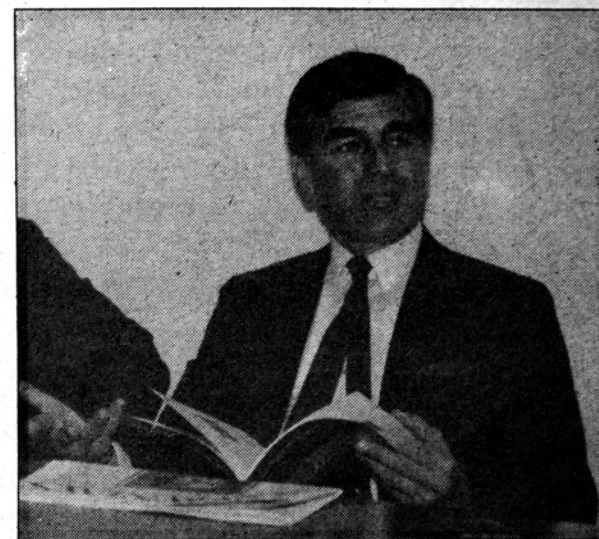
At a glance, **Bush** supports increased research funding to eliminate the major causes of long-term chronic disability and would like to make Medicare and Medicaid more flexible to assist the elderly to remain in their own homes. Bush feels the private sector initiatives, such as long-term care insurance and IRA's, should be part of the solution to finance costly long-term care.

Dukakis also supports keeping the elderly in their homes. As Governor of Massachusetts, he strongly supported the funding of home health care and chore (support) services. At the federal level, he endorsed the Pepper Long Term Care Bill which would have provided funding for home care services.

On the **Social Security** issue, both Bush and Dukakis support a solvent Social Security program. In 1983, Bush made a tie-breaking vote to support the Dole-Domenici amendment to the Budget Resolution to delay the increase of cost-of-living adjustments (COLA's) for Social Security recipients. The Democrats may choose to bring up Bush's vote on this amendment during the final days of the campaign and label it an anti-elderly vote.

Bush and Dukakis supported the newly enacted **Catastrophic Care** legislation. They recognize the need to curb the cost of the Medicare program without reducing the quality of care to the elderly. Both support the option of older adults enrolling in plans such as Health Maintenance Organizations and Preferred Provider Organizations.

In the area of **private pensions**, Bush favors the promotion of private pensions as a sound way to accumulate retirement income. He would like to see pensions made available to a broader cross-



Michael Dukakis photo by Scott Moore

section of the workforce. Dukakis supports making pension funds portable between places of employment.

Where does this leave us?

In the final days before the election, Bush and Dukakis will participate in televised debates before the American public. It may be appropriate for them to thoroughly debate aging issues, instead of only scratching the surface. Δ

Herbert P. Weiss is a nationally known writer in the field of aging. He is former Washington Correspondent for Contemporary Long-Term Care and editor of Aging Network News.

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Guide to National Organizations

by Herbert P. Weiss

The city of Washington, D.C. is home and organization headquarters for many national senior interest groups. These nearby organizations have an impact on the lives of Maryland seniors and the following list is only a sample of those available for you to join.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049
 (202) 728-4300



Founded in 1958 by the late Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP (with a membership of more than 28 million) is considered the largest organization for older Americans. AARP has developed an effective lobby in Washington to represent older adults in the areas of Social Security, pensions, taxes, health-care reform, social service programs, civil rights, consumer issues and employment. AARP initiatives such as its Health Care Campaign, Women's Initiative, Work Equity and Minority Affairs. Initiative seek to: reduce health care costs, increase access and promote quality of care; address the concerns of older women; protect the rights of the older worker; and improve the well-being of minorities. Member services include discounts at major hotel chains and car rentals, mail order pharmacy services, investment programs, travel service, AARP Motoring Plan, Group Health Insurance and Auto Homeowners Insurance. Audiovisuals are available for loan and AARP books can be purchased. Audiovisuals and books address a multitude of health care and aging issues. More than 140 publications are available free of charge. Information in these publications range from practical advice to "how-to" guides, demographics to resource publications. More than 3,700 AARP chapters and 2,500 Retired Teacher Association units throughout the nation provide opportunities for service and fellowship. Membership is open to anyone age 50 or older. Membership dues are \$5 for one year, \$12.50 for three years, and \$35 for 10 years. AARP members receive *Modern Maturity* magazine bimonthly and *AARP News Bulletin* 11 times per year. Members of the Retired Teacher Association units receive *NRTA News Bulletin* and an NTRA edition of *Modern Maturity* magazine.



Gray Panthers
 311 S. Juniper Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 545-6555
 1424 16th Street, N.W, Washington, D.C. 20035 (202) 387-3111

Founded in 1970, the Gray Panthers continue their struggle against poverty, inadequate health care and inadequate housing and nutrition. Nationwide, there are over 70,000 Gray Panthers in more than 80 local chapters who fight to conserve rent control and prevent evictions of people over 65 when a building turns into condominiums. Gray Panthers have helped to change zoning laws to allow shared living arrangements for non-related persons.

In Washington, D.C., the Gray Panthers lobby to expand health care programs, oppose Medicare and Social Security cuts and support legislation which would expand the rights of the old and disabled. This organization is not a single issue pressure group for the elderly. Through an alliance of young and old, the Gray Panthers fight for world peace and nuclear disarmament. Membership is open to all age groups. Contributions of \$25, \$50, \$100 or any other amount are accepted. The Gray Panther's publication, *Network*, is provided to all individuals who contribute over \$12.

National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE)
 1533 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 234-0832

Founded in 1921, NARFE is the only organization whose primary objective is to protect the interests of all persons eligible for civilian retirement from any agency of the federal government. NARFE monitors all legislative proposals before the Congress in the areas

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EASY PARKING

Organizations, cont. from p. 6

of retirement income, survivor benefits, health care, life insurance, taxes and consumer protection. NARFE's Political Action Committee (NARFE-PAC) and its 1,700 local chapters give it a powerful voice on Capitol Hill. Membership is open to individuals and spouses who are retired from the federal civilian service, individuals with five years of vested service or survivors of deceased federal workers. Membership dues are determined by age. NARFE's monthly magazine, Retirement Life is available to all members.

National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR)
1464 16th Street, N.W., Suite L-2,
Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 797-0657

Founded in 1975, NCCNHR's is committed to improving the quality of care for nursing home residents and provides a consumer voice in Washington on nursing home policy. Over 300 local state member groups in more than 45 states work to support nursing home reform by: promoting community involvement with nursing homes; intervening to resolve individual complaints and problems; working with health care professionals to improve patient care; monitoring regulatory activity at the state and federal levels; and supporting empowerment for nursing home residents and families. Organizational (from \$35 to \$300 depending on organizational budget) or individual (\$2 for nursing home resident; \$10 for individuals over age 65; and \$35 for other) memberships categories are available. Benefits include: 20 percent discount of NCCNHR publications, discount on registration fee for NCCNHR Annual Meeting; consultation services. Group members receive Action Alerts on long-term care issues. NCCNHR's bi-monthly newsletter Quality Care Advocate, is available to all members.

National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC)
925 Fifteenth Street, Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-8800

Founded in 1961, NCSC was one of many senior organizations that fought for the enactment of Medicare. NCSC now comprises 4800 senior citizen clubs with a total membership of four and a half million and it continues to be an advocacy organization.



At the federal level, NCSC fights to preserve Social Security benefits and protect Medicare and Medicaid benefits. NCSC supports federal funding for senior centers, nutrition, sites, community employment projects, low-income senior housing and social service programs. At the state level, it lobbies to prevent physicians from charging more than the Medicare-assigned rates and favors increased access to nursing homes and strict enforcement of nursing home regulations. It also supports the creation of "lifeline" utility rates and lower prescription drug costs for Medicare patients. Individuals over 50 years of age can join. Membership dues are \$12 for individual member and \$16 for family member (includes spouse). Membership benefits include: group rates on supplemental insurance, in-hospital insurance for people under 65, automobile insurance, money-saving prescription drug service, senior travel and tour service and discounts on motels and rented cars. NCSC's monthly publication, Senior Citizens News, is available to all members.



National Council on the Aging (NCOA),
600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., West Wing 100,
Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 479-1200

Founded in 1950, NCOA serves as a national source of information, training, technical assistance, advocacy and research in aging. In its 38 years of existence, this organization has implemented many innovative programs which increased the public's awareness of aging issues. Among its achievements, NCOA was the first organization to sponsor a national conference on retirement and aging issues. Its successful "Operational TLC" program influenced the development of the well-known and widely recognized Foster Grandparent program. On Capitol Hill, NCOA opposes cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and supports improving the quality of care in nursing homes. This organization is a strong advocate for the development of community-based services and expanding housing opportunities for older adults. NCOA network of seven affiliate units provide leadership opportunities and develop various special projects and special training activities for particular constituencies. Professionals in the areas of senior centers, adult day care, community-based long-term care, rural health care, senior housing, older employment and other related organizations can join their specific unit. Organizational (\$165) or individual (\$65 for individual; \$150 for contributing; \$1000 for life; \$20 for retiree; and \$25 for full-time student) membership categories are available. Organizational and individual membership benefits include: reduced registration fees for NCOA's Annual Conference and discounts on NCOA's publications. Organizational members will receive special member registration rate for all staff who attend Annual Conference. Free subscription to Perspectives on Aging, Current Literature on Aging, and to one or more professional affiliate unit newsletters are available to all membership categories.



Older Women's League (OWL)
730 Eleventh Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 783-6686

Founded in 1980, OWL is the first national grassroots membership organization to focus exclusively on women as they age. OWL has implemented a national campaign to educate policy makers and the public on health care and aging issues from the viewpoint of older women. OWL has developed model state bills on health insurance conversion rights and on respite services for caregivers. OWL has promoted education programs on death and dying to assist women in handling decisions on life support and funeral arrangements. OWL publishes a Gray Paper series on pensions, older women and employment and many other issues of concern. Membership dues are \$10 to join (\$5 for those who cannot afford more). OWL's bimonthly newsletter, Owl Observer, is available to all members .Δ

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