



EXHIBIT 7
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HB 236

January 16, 2007

TO: Representative Lake and Members of the House Taxation Committee

FROM: Marg Crennan, Volunteer Advocate, House Taxation Committee

RE: **Support HB 236, Residential property tax credit for elderly -- adjust for inflation**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the record my name is Marg Crennan, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with 153,000 members in the state. AARP Foundation, our affiliated charity, offers free tax preparation for low- and moderate-income individuals, with special attention to those 60 and older. We often hear through these volunteers that the residential property tax credit for the elderly is one of the best things the state does for older Montanans.

AARP Montana supports HB 236 because it helps limited income elderly Montanans who have a high housing cost burden. The Department of Housing and Urban Development compiles a survey of renters who have "worse case needs", defined as renters with very low incomes who pay more than half of their income for housing or live in severely substandard housing. In 2005, HUD reported that elderly households with very low incomes are more likely than other family types with comparable incomes to have worst case needs.

Furthermore, persons with disabilities have a greater likelihood of having worst case housing needs than other family types with very low incomes. And very low income renters in the West are less likely to receive housing assistance, and more likely to experience worst case housing needs.* It is likely that elderly, disabled Montanans have a high housing cost burden.

AARP Montana believes this bill would provide more meaningful assistance to elderly renters, who may additionally face high health care and heating and cooling costs.

Please support HB 236.

* The full HUD report can be found at <http://www.huduser.org/publications/affhsg/affhsgneed.html>.