

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AARP Montana, February 9, 2006
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AARP Survey Shows Montanans Support “Security Freeze” Protection

Helena – AARP Montana published the results of a January 2006 survey* of Montanans’ views on identity theft and protections from these crimes. The survey showed by overwhelming numbers that Montana voters want more control over their personal information and state protection from these crimes.

“One of every two Montanans (51%) is concerned about becoming an identity theft victim. A significant result is that more than three of four (78%) support legislation that would allow consumers to place a security freeze on their credit reports,” said Claudia Clifford, Associate State Director for AARP MT.

“We think the survey verifies what countless Montanans have told us in our Consumer Fraud Events across the state: that identity theft is a horrible crime for the consumer, Montanans are fearful of it, and that a security freeze is a useful and effective way to stop people from accessing and abusing our personal information,” added Clifford.

Other important results of the survey:

- Montanans object to credit bureaus being able to charge significant fees for this important protection.
- This could be an important election issue – nearly one of every three persons surveyed (30%) said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for public office if he or she supported the enactment of security freeze legislation.

Clifford today presented the results of the poll at a press conference with Attorney General Mike McGrath and Consumers Union chief expert on identity theft Gail Hillebrand. The Attorney General was announcing his commitment to recommend legislation to the next Legislature that would institute a security freeze for the protection of Montana consumers. Hillebrand is a national Consumers Union expert on identity theft and consumer protection. (Consumers Union is an independent research and testing organization that publishes the respected *Consumer Reports*.)

AARP Montana has been a consumer advocate for the last nine years in Montana, and is actively supporting the introduction of a bill that would provide security freeze protection for Montanans. The Attorney General, Hillebrand and AARP will testify at the Interim Committee on Economic Affairs, 8:30 am Friday (2/10) at the Capitol, Rm. 102.

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*The survey of 800 Montana registered voters was conducted from January 19-25, 2006, with a sampling error of $\pm 3.1\%$. The telephone survey was conducted by Alan Newman Research.

**Economic Affairs Committee Meeting
February 10, 2006**

Exhibit #3