Jo Ann C. Jenkins
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

June 22, 2016

The Honorable Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Portman and Senator Brown:

On behalf of AARP's nearly 38 million members nationwide, thank you for your leadership in introducing the "Seniors Tax Hike Prevention Act of 2016" to protect those taxpayers with high health care expenses.

The "Seniors Tax Hike Prevention Act of 2016" would delay for two years a scheduled increase – from 7.5 percent to 10 percent – of the income threshold after which medical expenses can be deducted on itemized tax returns. AARP supports this temporary delay as a needed immediate step in the right direction to permanently restore the current tax threshold for older Americans with high out-of-pocket health care costs.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million Americans age 50 and older, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

Even with Medicare, beneficiaries spend a large portion of their income on out-of-pocket expenses. The average Medicare beneficiary 65 years old and older spent on average about $6,150 out-of-pocket on medical care in 2011. As you well know, older Americans often face high costs for long term services and supports, which are generally not covered by Medicare, as well as hospitalizations and prescription drugs. Tax relief in this area can provide needed resources, especially important to middle income seniors with high medical costs.

601 E Street, NW | Washington, DC 20049
202-434-2277 | 1-888-OUR-AARP | 1-888-687-2277 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org | twitter: @aarp | facebook.com/aarp | youtube.com/aarp

According to preliminary 2013 IRS tax data:

- The share of the deduction claimed by taxpayers age 65+ with income under $50,000 in 2013 was 30.6 percent; and
- For taxpayers with income below $75,000 the share was 44.3 percent of the total deduction claimed that year.

The medical expense deduction truly is middle class tax relief.

AARP believes every effort should be made to keep the threshold for the medical expense deduction as low as possible to help protect people with high health care costs. This is consistent with our long stated goal to increase healthcare access and affordability for all Americans. For these reasons and others, we are pleased to endorse your legislation and look forward to working on a bipartisan basis with you to enact this legislation into law.

Sincerely,

Jo Ann Jenkins