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AARP Urges Presidential Debate Moderator to Press Both Candidates on How They Would Address Social Security's Financial Challenges

In Major National Survey, 67% of AARP Members Cite Social Security's Future as Their #1 Concern

Washington DC — AARP today announced it sent a letter to *NBC Nightly News* anchor Lester Holt, moderator of the first Presidential debate, urging him to press both Presidential candidates for details on their plans for keeping Social Security financially sound with adequate benefits for future generations.

The Social Security system faces a significant revenue shortfall that, while still a number of years away, would result in a nearly 25 percent, across-the-board benefits cut for all Social Security recipients, if left unaddressed. Despite the high stakes, the issue has been largely ignored in this election.

The letter to Mr. Holt, signed by AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond, urges him to use the September 26 debate at Hofstra University to get the candidates to talk about an issue critical to so many Americans. The letter states, "Social Security affects not just the 60 million people who rely on its benefits today, but also the 170 million people who pay into the program with each paycheck and are counting on it for tomorrow", and goes on to lament the lack of clarity and specificity provided on the issue of Social Security, to date, by both candidates.

"Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have provided some information on how they would address Social Security's challenges but critical facts are missing," AARP's letter states. "Secretary Clinton has spoken of expanding Social Security benefits for caregivers and widows and increasing taxes on high earners to pay for these changes, but she hasn't laid out the details about how she would pay to expand the program that already faces a shortfall. Mr. Trump has said he would keep Social Security sound by targeting fraud and improving economic growth without cutting benefits. What kind of growth rate is he talking about, and is he considering other changes to the program?"

Despite its centrality to American life for more than 80 years, Social Security doesn't receive the attention it deserves from candidates or media. But in a recent nationwide survey of more than 23,000 AARP members, all age 50 and over, 67 percent of poll respondents ranked the future of Social Security as their *number-one* concern, AARP said.

Near its close, AARP's letter to Mr. Holt states, "Social Security represents a genuine test of presidential leadership. Are the candidates prepared to show that they have it? The debates may be the last, best opportunity for voters to get the answers they deserve before November 8. We urge you to seize this opportunity."

The letter was sent as part of [Take A Stand](#) – a national campaign to press the Presidential candidates to commit to taking real action to keep Social Security strong.

AARP, which is sponsoring the Presidential debates, said it will send similar letters to all moderators of future Presidential debates, including Martha Raddatz of ABC News and Anderson Cooper of CNN, Elaine Quijano of CBS News, and Fox News's Chris Wallace.

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About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more,

visit www.aarp.org or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn_Jenkins on Twitter.

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