Testimony in Support of the Secretary of State's Restitution Fund for Victims of Fraud
Presented by AARP Nevada

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Padron, and I am here today as the Advocacy Director, accompanied by Maria Moore, the state director, on behalf of AARP Nevada and our thousands of members across the state. AARP is dedicated to advocating for policies that protect older adults, ensuring their financial security, dignity, and well-being. We strongly support the establishment of the Secretary of State's Restitution Fund for Victims of Fraud, a critical initiative that will provide much-needed financial relief to those who have fallen victim to securities fraud.

The Growing Threat of Fraud

Fraud is not just a financial issue—it is a crisis that threatens the livelihoods of hardworking Nevadans, particularly older adults. According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported over **$10 billion** in fraud losses in 2023 alone. Securities fraud is especially devastating, often targeting retirees who have spent decades saving for their future, only to see their life savings wiped away by unscrupulous actors.

Why This Fund is Urgently Needed

1. **Providing a Safety Net for Victims**
   - Many fraud victims have no way to recover their stolen funds, particularly when perpetrators are insolvent or cannot be located.
   - The restitution fund would serve as a financial lifeline, helping victims reclaim some of what was lost and regain their financial footing.
2. **A Self-Sustaining, Fiscally Responsible Solution**
   - This fund is designed to be self-sustaining, financed through penalties and fines collected from those who violate securities laws.
   - No new taxes or additional state funding are required, making this a cost-effective way to support victims without burdening Nevada taxpayers.
3. **Protecting the Most Vulnerable**
   - Older Nevadans are disproportionately affected by financial fraud, often suffering greater losses than younger victims.
   - Many seniors rely on fixed incomes and do not have the time or resources to recover from financial devastation.
4. **Encouraging Reporting and Prevention**
   - Fear, shame, and a lack of available support prevent many victims from reporting fraud. A restitution fund signals that the state takes fraud seriously and encourages victims to come forward.

- Increased reporting helps law enforcement identify and stop fraudulent operations, protecting future potential victims.

5. **Strengthening Consumer Confidence and Nevada's Economy**
    - By ensuring that victims have a means of restitution, we strengthen trust in Nevada's financial system, encouraging investment and economic stability.
    - A strong consumer protection framework makes Nevada a leader in fraud prevention, setting a precedent for other states to follow.

A Call to Action

The creation of this fund is not just good policy—it is the right thing to do. Fraud victims should not be left to suffer the consequences of crimes committed against them. The Nevada Legislature has the opportunity to take meaningful action by passing this measure and standing up for justice, accountability, and financial security.

On behalf of AARP Nevada and the countless Nevadans who have suffered from financial fraud, we urge you to support the Secretary of State's Restitution Fund and vote YES to provide real relief to victims who need it most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.