

2026 Federal Candidate Questionnaire

This summer, Next50 along with several aging advocates listed below requested Colorado's candidates running for federal office in the 2026 mid-term election to complete a candidate survey on aging.

Older adults are one of the fastest growing demographic segments of Colorado. An engaged and active part of our state, older Coloradans deserve to know more about the policies their candidates' support.

This document compiles all candidate responses *received* for the 2026 Federal Candidate Questionnaire.

Below are the listed organizations that supported this questionnaire.

[AARP Colorado](#)
[Bell Policy Center](#)
[Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#)
[Colorado Center for Aging](#)
[Encore Roadmap](#)
[iAging](#)
[Leverage Colorado](#)
[Next50 Foundation](#)

Note: Next50 does not endorse candidates for any election. The information provided below is direct responses from the candidates listed and does not necessarily reflect Next50's view on the issue

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U.S. House of Representatives

Congressional District 5

Jessica Killin

How do you think ageism shows up in our communities, and what do you believe are ageism's biggest impacts?

Ageism shows up when older adults are pushed out of the workforce, denied care or coverage because of assumptions about their capacity, or treated as burdens rather than valued members of our communities. It shows up in hiring and layoff decisions, in health care settings where older patients' symptoms are dismissed, and in policy debates that treat Medicare and Social Security as expendable line items instead of promises we made. The impact is real: seniors lose income security, independence, and access to care, and families absorb the cost — financially and emotionally — of gaps our systems should be filling.

What do you think are the two largest challenges facing older Coloradans in your district?

First, the rising cost of health care and prescription drugs, compounded by federal Medicaid cuts that threaten to close hospitals and nursing homes in our region. Second, the erosion of retirement security — from the looming Social Security shortfall to the financial and emotional strain on unpaid family caregivers who are stepping in to fill the gaps.

A [recent report](#) shows that the Social Security Trust Fund is being depleted quicker than previously projected. If Congress does not take action, monthly Social Security benefits will automatically be cut by 22 percent. This will result in an average monthly benefit cut of \$500.

What policies do you support to ensure the trust fund's solvency?

I oppose privatization schemes and benefit cuts, including raising the retirement age. Any solvency fix should ask more of the wealthiest Americans and corporations, not seniors who paid into the system their whole working lives.

Twenty-two percent of Colorado adults provide more than \$11 billion of unpaid care to older adults throughout our state. Many of these caregivers face physical, emotional, and financial challenges as a result of their unpaid responsibilities. What policies do you support to promote the economic well-being of Colorado's unpaid caregivers?

I support giving family caregivers meaningful tax relief for their out-of-pocket costs, expanding respite care so caregivers aren't stretched to the breaking point, and paid family and medical leave so people don't have to choose between a paycheck and caring for a parent or spouse. Caregiving is real work that keeps our health care system afloat, and our tax and labor policy should reflect that.

What guardrails on AI do you support to ensure older adults are protected from discriminatory practices - including in systems that are involved in employment and health care decisions?

I support clear federal rules requiring transparency and human review when AI is used in employment or health care decisions that affect people's lives — including disclosure when AI is used, the right to appeal an AI-driven denial or rejection to a human, and regular bias audits of these systems, with real enforcement when they produce age-discriminatory outcomes. Innovation and accountability aren't opposites; we can grow these industries while protecting Coloradans, especially older workers and patients, from being screened out by a black box.

More than 70,000 older Coloradans receive health coverage through Medicaid. Federal changes to the program as a result of HR1 are projected to significantly reduce Medicaid funding in the coming years. These changes, in addition to mandatory work requirements, are projected to harm older adults who rely upon this program. If elected, what policies would you support to ensure Medicaid remains a reliable, accessible source of health coverage for the older Coloradans who need it?

I will fight to repeal the Medicaid cuts in the recent federal budget bill that are projected to force hundreds of thousands of Coloradans off coverage and close hospitals and nursing homes in our state. I oppose new administrative work requirements that mostly just create red tape and coverage gaps for people who are already working, caregiving, or too sick to meet reporting burdens. I'll push to protect and strengthen long-term care coverage under Medicaid, since it's the primary payer for nursing home care for older Americans.

If elected, would you support H.R. 3522, the Protecting Older Works Against Discrimination Act of 2025? Please answer yes/no. You're welcome to provide additional context if you'd like.

Yes. Older workers should be able to bring age discrimination claims on the same footing as other protected classes, without a higher legal bar to clear.

If elected, would you support S.2703, the Protecting Older Americans Act of 2025? Please answer yes/no. You're welcome to provide additional context if you'd like.

Yes. Older Americans deserve strong, modernized federal protections, and I'd support this legislation as part of a broader push to protect seniors from discrimination and fraud.

If elected, would you support H.R. 5514, the Protecting Older Job Applicants Act of 2025? Please answer yes/no. You're welcome to provide additional context if you'd like.

Yes. Job applicants shouldn't be screened out because of their age, and I support closing the loopholes that let that happen in hiring practices.

If elected, would you support H.R. 7524, the Older Workers' Bureau Act? Please answer yes/no. You're welcome to provide additional context if you'd like.

Yes.

If elected, would you support H.R. 2036, the Credit for Caring Act of 2025? Please answer yes/no. You're welcome to provide additional context if you'd like.

Yes

Congressional District 7

Rep. Brittany Pettersen

How do you think ageism shows up in our communities, and what do you believe are ageism's biggest impacts?

The impacts of ageism in our society are significant, contributing to social isolation, financial insecurity, poorer health outcomes, and lost opportunities for communities to benefit from the experience, knowledge and leadership of older adults. As Colorado's population ages, it's increasingly important that we foster communities where people of all ages are valued, included, and empowered to participate fully.

As a mom and someone who has championed policies that support families and caregivers, I believe we all have a responsibility to build communities where older adults are treated with dignity, have access to the care and resources they need, and remain connected and engaged.

What do you think are the two largest challenges facing older Coloradans in your district?

The two largest challenges facing older Coloradans in my district are affordability and access to healthcare. The rising cost of housing, groceries, utilities, and prescription medications is putting significant financial pressure on older adults living on fixed incomes. Too many seniors are forced to decide between paying for essentials and accessing the care they need.

These challenges can be especially difficult for those living in mountain and rural communities within the district, where provider shortages and long travel distances can limit access to care.

A recent report shows that the Social Security Trust Fund is being depleted quicker than previously projected. If Congress does not take action, monthly Social Security benefits will automatically be cut by 22 percent. This will result in an average monthly benefit cut of \$500.

What policies do you support to ensure the trust fund's solvency?

Social Security is a promise that Americans have earned over a lifetime of work, and Congress has a responsibility to protect it. I oppose cuts to earned benefits, including raising the retirement age or privatizing Social Security.

As a cosponsor of the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act, I support strengthening the program's long-term solvency. The legislation would gradually phase out the payroll tax cap so that the highest earners contribute on all of their income, helping ensure Social Security remains strong for current and future generations. It also updates the benefit formula to account for those additional contributions and adopts a more accurate cost-of-living adjustment that better reflects the spending patterns of older Americans, while ensuring any resulting benefit increases do not jeopardize Medicaid or SSI eligibility.

We should protect earned benefits and strengthen Social Security by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share.

Twenty-two percent of Colorado adults provide more than \$11 billion of unpaid care to older adults throughout our state. Many of these caregivers face physical, emotional, and financial challenges as a result of their unpaid responsibilities. What policies do you support to promote the economic well-being of Colorado's unpaid caregivers?

Family caregivers are the backbone of our long-term care system, providing billions of dollars in unpaid care that allows older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and communities. Caregivers often face financial strain, interrupted careers, and long-term impacts on their own retirement security while caring for a loved one.

I've supported legislation to provide meaningful financial support to family caregivers. As a cosponsor of the Credit for Caring Act, I support creating a federal tax credit of up to \$5,000 to help working family caregivers offset out-of-pocket costs. I've also worked across the aisle to strengthen caregivers' retirement security. I supported the bipartisan Improving Retirement Security for Family Caregivers Act, which would allow caregivers with little or no earned income to continue contributing to a Roth IRA, and the Catching Up Family Caregivers Act, which gives full-time family caregivers additional time to take advantage of higher catch-up retirement contribution limits after they've stepped away from the workforce to provide care.

In addition to these efforts, I support expanding access to affordable respite care, strengthening home- and community-based services, and ensuring caregivers have the resources and support they need. We should make it easier—not harder—for Coloradans to care for the people they love while protecting their own long-term economic security.

What guardrails on AI do you support to ensure older adults are protected from discriminatory practices - including in systems that are involved in employment and health care decisions?

To protect older adults from discriminatory or harmful uses of AI—especially in systems that influence employment, housing, and healthcare decisions—we need strong, enforceable guardrails that protect consumers. As a member of the House's bipartisan Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and the House Financial Services Committee's bipartisan Working Group on AI, I've advocated for Congress to catch up with the rapid pace of AI development by establishing thoughtful, national standards that protect consumers while fostering innovation.

We also need strong safeguards to prevent AI from being weaponized against seniors through scams, impersonation, and financial fraud. Older adults are already disproportionately targeted by criminals using AI-generated voices, deepfakes, and automated phishing tools. That's why I introduced the Preventing Deep Fake Scams Act, bipartisan legislation that cracks down on AI-enabled fraud and strengthens protections for consumers, banks, credit unions, and the broader economy. This bill works hand-in-hand with other efforts to protect seniors from increasingly sophisticated schemes that use AI to impersonate loved ones, steal personal information, or drain life savings. No one should lose everything because a scammer used an AI-generated voice or fake image to deceive them.

AI has enormous potential to improve care, expand access, and reduce costs, but only if we build systems that are fair, transparent, and safe. I will continue pushing for strong guardrails that protect older adults, prevent discrimination, and stop bad actors from exploiting AI to defraud vulnerable people.

More than 70,000 older Coloradans receive health coverage through Medicaid. Federal changes to the program as a result of HR1 are projected to significantly reduce Medicaid funding in the coming years. These changes, in addition to mandatory work requirements, are projected to harm older adults who rely upon this program. If elected, what policies would you

support to ensure Medicaid remains a reliable, accessible source of health coverage for the older Coloradans who need it?

Medicaid is a lifeline for more than 70,000 older Coloradans, providing essential healthcare, long-term services, and home- and community-based care that allows seniors to age with dignity in the communities they love. That's why I strongly opposed the Medicaid cuts included in H.R. 1. These cuts have threatened the health and financial security of older adults, people with disabilities, and the providers who support them every single day.

We are already seeing the consequences of policies like these across the country: rural hospitals pushed to the brink, seniors in nursing homes losing care, and children with life-threatening illnesses struggling to access treatment. These are not hypothetical. These are real people, facing real harm because of policy decisions.

And now, mandatory work requirements would add another barrier, creating layers of paperwork or reporting requirements that can cause eligible people to lose coverage not because they no longer qualify, but because of bureaucratic hurdles. Older adults, caregivers, and individuals with chronic health conditions should never lose access to care because of administrative traps designed to harm our most vulnerable.

We should be strengthening Medicaid, not weakening it. I will continue fighting for policies that preserve access to home- and community-based services, protect Medicaid's flexibility to meet healthcare needs of Coloradans, and ensure providers have the resources they need to deliver high-quality care.

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