

# What Matters Most? Senior Caregivers and the Upcoming Election



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With a tremendously important presidential election just months away, it's been interesting to read what caregivers of seniors (professional or otherwise) perceive as their primary political concerns and/or issues.

AgeingCare.com recently conducted a survey that had a whopping 87% response rate (albeit the names were not randomly selected and advanced internet targeting strategies were most certainly utilized). The questionnaire's primary focus centered around "serious issues facing America today." Many of these issues, of course, are currently being kicked around on a national stage by politicians from both sides of the aisle.

Three issues held majority sway among the 600 or so caregivers who responded to the survey: the solvency of Medicare and Medicaid, health care reform, and the overall economy.

Medicare and Medicaid, which pays the majority of elder-care costs in the US, was rated the caregivers' top concern (32 percent). Currently, both programs are *facing a future of reduced benefits and eventual insolvency* if current glaring dysfunctions aren't rectified.

Health care reform followed closely as the top concern (28 percent), with seniors and their caregivers desperately seeking to understand what level of care they can expect to offer -- and eventually receive/need -- as they, themselves, continue to naturally age as well. The study points out that health care alone will account for some 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product by 2020. Wow.

Concerns about the economy were also cited by nearly 30 percent of caregivers. AARP reports that in 2007, family caregivers spent an average of \$5,500 to care for an aging relative. With the economic factors of the day determining the degree to which these costs can be weathered, let's just say it's raining heavily at the moment.

If asked, what would be your major national concerns? They might include the items listed above, or could cover entirely different subjects, like the environment, national defense or gun legislation or all three. But as one respondent wisely pointed out: *"Without economic stability, the other issues don't really matter. Yes, gun control and the environment are important, but right now my grandmother needs clothes."*

When you go to the polls in November, identify the agenda that closely relates to your particular situation and be sure to cast a vote. *The future of this wonderful nation depends on your voice being heard.*

Keeping the promise,



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