

Debra Whitman

Debra Whitman, PhD, is an economist and expert on aging issues. She has extensive experience in national policymaking and domestic and international research. As an economist, she is a strategic thinker whose life's work has been devoted to solving problems and improving the systems that impact us all throughout our lives.

As Chief Public Policy Officer for AARP, Debra leads a team of 150 experts in all aspects of policy development, analysis, research and global thought leadership. She and her teams produce policy and research insights and solutions that help communities, lawmakers, and the private sector improve our lives as we age.



Debra serves as an AARP spokesperson on a diverse set of issues, including retirement and financial security, health care and healthy longevity, engaging a multi-generational workforce, and long-term care and caregiving. In this role, she connects with a range of national and international stakeholders through events and speaking engagements with institutions such as Forbes, the Aspen Institute, the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Economic Forum (WEF). She has appeared in or been quoted by media outlets including The New York Times, Bloomberg, USA Today, NBC Nightly News, CBS News, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, and Politico. Previously, as staff director for the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, Debra worked across the aisle to increase retirement security, lower the cost of health care, protect vulnerable seniors, safeguard consumers, make the pharmaceutical industry more transparent, and improve our nation's long term care system.

Before that, she worked for the Congressional Research Service as a specialist in the economics of aging. She provided members of Congress and their staff with research and advice and authored analytical reports on the economic impacts of policies affecting older Americans.

From 2001 to 2003, Debra served as a Brookings LEGIS Fellow to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. Earlier in her career, she conducted research on savings and retirement for the Social Security Administration.

Debra is a writer and public speaker, a mom, and an advocate for those whose voices need to be heard.

Follow her at @policydeb.