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Kathleen Connell to retire from AARP Rhode Island

March 4, 2021 / Nancy Thomas

Kathleen Connell, the State Director for AARP Rhode Island, will be retiring. Connell has

By Nancy Thomas

served with the AARP for the past 20 years. Connell served as the RI Secretary of State from 1987 to 1993, and started her political career on

the School Committee, and then the Town Council in Middletown, serving for 13 years. Prior to running for Secretary of State, Connell served one term in the RI Senate. Wikipedia lists her most noteworthy achievement during her State Office position was saving

historical records in the Rhode Island state capitol's basement. Connell was inducted into the RI Heritage Hall of Fame in 2010 and



Laboratory.

is a 2013 recipient of the Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill Award. The O'Neill Award was named for Isabelle Ahearn O'Neill by the YWCA and was created in her memory to honor the state's women leaders. The RI Heritage Hall of Fame notes that, "Kathleen has been

connected with health care for most of her adult life. After graduation, she joined the Visiting Nurse Service and worked in the local neighborhoods with the sick and elderly. She then became an educator, teaching health at the local middle school where she established the first health care curriculum in the Newport public school system." In 1960, she married Gerald Connell (who died in 2007), and they had three children, Larry, a

Kathleen, a practicing attorney. Kathleen assumed the position of Rhode Island State Director of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP Rhode Island's former name) in 1999 following a long career in public

service, education, and health care. Prior to joining AARP, Kathleen was the coordinator of

governmental relations at Brown University's Northeast and Islands Regional Educational

colonel in the United States Army, Kelly, a pre-school instructor for the Head Start program, and

Her career in public service included three terms as Rhode Island's Secretary of State, a term in the Rhode Island Senate, and sixteen years of elected service in local town offices. During that time, she was a leader in numerous education and health care initiatives and in issues affecting women. She served as vice chair of the Democratic State Committee and was appointed to the Credentials Committee for the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta in 1988.

Throughout her career, she has been a champion for causes that promote issues concerning health care, including long-term care, better pay for nurses, and improved nursing education. As Secretary of State, she assumed a leadership role on the issues of voter education and parity for women. Today, as State Director of AARP Rhode Island, she continues to fight for access to quality health care for all citizens.

Kathleen has served as a member of numerous organizations and committees in the health care

field. She was a founding director and past president of Shake-A-Leg, a national organization for

the treatment of spinal cord injuries; and she has served on the board of directors of the Visiting Nurse Association of Newport and on the board of incorporators of Delta Dental. Kathleen has been active with the Japan-America Society/Black Ships Festival as president and now as president emeritus. She is the recipient of many awards and recognitions, including: a

citation from the consul general of Japan; the John E. Fogarty Humanitarian Award; the Salve

Regina University Alumna of the Year Award; and the Juliette Low Award from the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island. Kathleen represented The Newport Foundation as a platform speaker at the "Apocalypse Now" Conference in Moscow in 1992, a convocation that featured the Dali Lama and Mikhail

Here is a video of Kathleen Connell at the AARP Rhode Island:

AARP Rhode Island will be updating this information with her accomplishments at the

The national agency is engaged in looking for her replacement and has posted this description

State & Community Engagement (SCE) enables AARP to be a nationwide organization, which strengthens our capacity to carry out our mission. The SCE team includes: 53 states and

Rhode Island State Director - AARP Rhode Island

Business Unit Description

on their website. Their job description follows...

Gorbachev as the keynote speakers."

association.

Office of Community Engagement (including the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA): AARP's Educator Community), and the Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE). Summary As the **State Director of Rhode Island**, you will be a trusted voice for people 50-plus with the media and the public and a driving force and tireless advocate for those 50-plus. You will help

the 50-plus and their families to live their best lives and ensure that AARP is the "go-to resource"

territories across 6 regions with regional management, the Office of Volunteer Engagement, the

and leader across the state on issues important to the 50-plus population. Responsibilities

context for volunteer Executive Council members and State Office staff to develop a comprehensive state plan that reflects defined goals.

As **State Director of Rhode Island,** you will:

performance. EXECUTE FOR RESULTS: Achieve social impact through Advocacy, Volunteer Engagement, Media/Communications, and Enhanced Community Engagement. LEVERAGE ENTERPRISE CAPACITIES: Employ a matrix management approach to maximize

BUILD AND LEAD STRONG MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE: Position the state for maximum

SET THE STRATEGIC VISION: Articulate the overall strategic vision and set organizational

- AARP enterprise assets for the state. CULTIVATE STRATEGIC NETWORKS: Establish and maintain strategic networks, act as a convener to address the needs of members and the 50-plus members and stakeholders.
- Requirements Key Requirements include:
- BA degree in Public Administration, Management, Political Science, Community Organization, Gerontology or related discipline. Advanced degree a plus.

10 years of directly related experience, or an equivalent combination of training and

 Strong understanding of public policy issues facing the state and AARP membership. And strong understanding of the political environment and other dynamics impacting AARP's

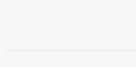
A minimum of 4 years of executive management/leadership is strongly preferred.

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Ability to travel up to 50% of the time is required.

experience related to the duties of the position.



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