

ADVOCATES *for* Senior Issues

YOU'RE INVITED

AFSI Membership Meeting

October 17, 2025 | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

WHO: The Advocates for Senior Issues Members, Guests, and Sponsors.

WHAT: An opportunity to advocate, learn, and grow together.

There will be a continental breakfast so be sure to arrive early and bring a guest!

WHEN: October 17, 2025
10:00am to 12:00pm

WHERE:

*Salvation Army Kroc Center
2800 Division Ave S,
Grand Rapids, MI 49507*

QUESTIONS?

Please contact AAAWM
Chief Executive Officer,
Kendrick Heinlein.

 KendrickH@aaawm.org

 616-222-7018

Advocates for Senior Issues is a non-partisan organization, affiliated with the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. Learn more at www.aaawm.org/afsi.

Legislative Speaker

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN FITZGERALD

John Fitzgerald is serving his first term representing the 83rd House District. As a legislator, he is guided by a “listen first” mentality—learning from the experiences of his constituents to build policy that solves everyday, real issues impacting West Michigan residents. He’s focused on education, reproductive and general health care, gun reform, and economic opportunity for all. As a graduate of Michigan State University, he enjoys traveling around the state, playing golf, walking his dog, and hoping the Tigers will make a run at the pennant.

Program Presentation

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

William Anderson will be joining us to discuss the story of the Detroit Tigers in Lakeland, Florida, and the Baseball History of the Grand Rapids Chicks and Grand Rapids Black Sox. William Anderson is one of the foremost baseball historians, especially with regard to the Detroit Tigers and Michigan baseball. He is an author, speaker, and baseball historian extraordinaire.

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AGENDA: Call to Order & Announcements:
Margaret Howard, President

LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION:

Representative John Fitzgerald

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SPONSORS



Revive & Thrive Project
Nourishing the community, one meal at a time.



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Michigan



GOLD

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM)
AARP | Beacon Hill at Eastgate | Beth A. Swagman
Elders' Helpers

SILVER

Kelso Homes | Life EMS | Meijer Inc.
MKD Funeral Homes | Priority Health
Reliance Community Care Partners | West Michigan Credit Union

BRONZE

Care Resources PACE | Community Caregivers
Grand Rapids Elderly Care | Leslie Sanford
Lody and Joanne Zwarensteijn | Ofield Funeral Home
Parents Empowering Network | Primary Home Care | Tom Appel

FRIEND

Beth Mans Greenridge Realty | Chris Becker Kent Co. Prosecutor
Fair Housing Center of West Michigan
Grand Rapids Savvy Senior Learning Series
Joel Jason Certified Financial Planner | Kristyn Merkle
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan | Oasis Senior Advisors
Phil France | Renew Mobility | Senior Neighbors



ADVOCATES *for* Senior Issues

JOIN US MONTHLY TO...

ADVOCATE | LEARN | BUILD COMMUNITY

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

3RD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

Except July, August, & December

THE SALVATION ARMY KROC CENTER

(Unless otherwise noted)

10:00 AM MEETING CALL TO ORDER

September 19th

Prince Conference Center

October 17th

November 21st

January 16th

February 20th

March 20th

April 17th

Blanford Nature Center

May 15th

June 26th

TBD

AFSI is open to the public and free
to attend for first time guests.

QUESTIONS?



www.aaawm.org/afsi



KendrickH@aaawm.org



616-222-7018

THE LOCAL SENIOR ADVOCACY GROUP GIVING VOICE TO OLDER ADULTS

THE WHY: The Advocates for Senior Issues (AFSI) is the premier older adult advocacy group in the state of Michigan. AFSI is a non-partisan group that strives to be inclusive of all of Kent County's diverse senior communities.

THE WHO: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are centers, and retirement communities, bringing the estimated reach of the group to over 10,000 people. AFSI members have various backgrounds, affiliations, and work histories, but many have a history of service, volunteerism, and/or activism.

THE IMPACT: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are educated on topics of importance to seniors. Programs include elder abuse and scams, healthy aging, senior driving issues, aging in place, Medicare, and more. State Senators and Representatives, as well as local County Commissioners and other special guests, are also invited to present to the group & answer questions.

THE HISTORY: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are *Citizen Senate*. Founded and led by Sister Agnes Theil, the group originally started with just a few dozen members. In 2001, its name was officially changed to *Advocates for Senior Issues*. The group was instrumental in bringing the Medicaid Waiver program to Kent County in 1992, making it one of the first counties in the state to have this cost-efficient program. AFSI played a major role in the Kent County Senior Millage campaign in 1998, as well as the millage renewal and increase in 2006 and 2014.

THE LEGACY: Two members have earned the Blue Cross Blue Shield Claude Pepper award for advocacy, and three members have received the Maggie Fegel Award. Additionally, three members have received the Governor's statewide Senior Leadership Award, and five members from the group have been awarded a Medal of Merit by former U.S. Congressman Vern Ehlers.

THE ACTION: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are the exception of July, August, and December. These meetings take place on the third Friday of the month, from 10:00 am-12:00 pm, with an average attendance of 125 members. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend a meeting to witness AFSI in action.