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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORS AND AARP NH CAUTION SENIORS ABOUT INVESTOR FRAUD

Concord, NH (May 7, 2008) – On Wednesday, April 30th over 100 New Hampshire seniors attended a fraud prevention seminar held at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel in Portsmouth. The seminar, sponsored by the New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation, Securities and Exchange Commission and AARP NH, provided seniors with warning signs of fraudulent and unscrupulous sales practices. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of federal and state regulators.

Commissioner Kathleen Casey of the Securities & Exchange Commission emphasized “Fraud against seniors is a national problem and a high priority of the SEC.” She explained that the New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation is in the forefront of efforts to prevent fraud against seniors. Casey pointed out that New Hampshire was the only state in New England where an SEC Commissioner participated in this type of seminar. The SEC is the primary regulator of the financial services industry and Kathleen Casey was appointed as SEC Commissioner by President George W. Bush in 2006.

Mark Connolly, Director of the New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation, noted “Our senior investors are frequently targeted by swindlers and unscrupulous sales people

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and as our NH seniors live healthier and longer lives, protecting their nest egg is critical". Connolly stressed that seniors represent over 50% of the complaints filed with the Bureau and estimates that 1/3 of our enforcement actions were the result of complaints by those 60 and over, despite being about 18% of our population.

Connolly also noted that in the past year, the NH Securities Bureau conducted 63 securities investigations, assessing in excess of \$7.0 Million in fines, penalties and restitution to investors. Restitution to investors was over \$3 Million. In addition, about \$500,000 was spent on NH – related investor education, including senior outreach programs similar to this Portsmouth meeting.

In addition to Commissioner Casey, the meeting included presentations by representatives from the New Hampshire Securities Bureau, Jeff Spill and Kevin Moquin, Securities & Exchange Commission Sandra Bailey and Joseph Mick, and AARP Andres Castillo. Several of the presenters noted that some of the current investment scams /frauds being seen in New Hampshire are telephone "cold calling" to sell investments that either don't exist or involve investing in worthless "shell" companies. In addition, the Bureau has seen a significant increase in complaints from seniors regarding sales of unsuitable products. According to industry regulations, a product may be unsuitable for a customer if facts such as age, investment objectives, need to access the funds and risk tolerance are not appropriately evaluated by the financial professional who is recommending the product. Bureau statistics reflect numerous suitability complaints involving the sale of variable annuities.

If anyone wishes to contact the Bureau regarding a complaint or possible fraud, or to determine the validity/background of a particular sales person or product, they may call the Bureau at 1 800 735-2964 or through our website: www.sos.state.nh.us/securities.