

November 5, 2019

The Hon. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
The Hon. Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
The Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Lamar Alexander, Chairman  
The Hon. Patty Murray, Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Bobby Scott, Chairman  
The Hon. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

On behalf of the undersigned 102 national organizations with a vested interest in the well-being of America's older adults and caregivers, we write to you today in support of the *Dignity in Aging Act* (H.R. 4334) to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA), which received unanimous support in the House on October 28.

We thank you for working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to advance a 2019 reauthorization of Older Americans Act, which expired on September 30. Achieving a reauthorization of this critical Act that reaffirms and protects its mission will ensure the sustainability of vital OAA programs, as well as the health, dignity, and independence of older Americans and their caregivers who depend on them.

The OAA is essential to developing, coordinating, and delivering home and community-based services that help older adults age with independence and dignity in their homes and communities. Many individuals served by OAA-funded programs are at significant risk of hunger, isolation, abuse, and losing their ability to live with health and independence. OAA-supported programs are provided to more than 11 million seniors and their caregivers annually. These vital supports include, but are not limited to, home-delivered and congregate nutrition services, in-home supportive services, multipurpose senior centers, transportation, caregiver support, disease prevention and health promotion, community service employment, the long-term care ombudsman program, and services to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults.

By keeping seniors healthy and in their communities for more than 50 years, OAA programs have delayed or prevented the need for more expensive institutional care for many older adults, which is often paid for through Medicare or Medicaid. OAA services can effectively save taxpayer, state, and federal dollars. In addition to helping older adults age in place where they most often want to be, OAA programs

have improved our country's fiscal future and promoted efficiencies within the health care system by preventing unnecessary hospital stays, reducing readmission rates, coordinating care, and managing care transitions.

We appreciate the bipartisan manner in which Leaders and Members of the House approved the *Dignity in Aging Act*, H.R. 4334. This legislation to reauthorize the OAA builds upon the early bipartisan Senate draft bill and incorporates a number of important priorities articulated by stakeholder organizations. Moving forward, we understand that the Senate is considering its reauthorization process and appreciate the opportunity to work with Senate leadership on a bill that will garner bipartisan support in both chambers. However, we urge lawmakers in the Senate to incorporate the priorities reflected in H.R. 4334 into a compromise bill.

Most importantly, the *Dignity in Aging Act* calls for much-needed and necessary investments in the OAA by increasing funding authorizations over the next five years—a top priority of the undersigned organizations and the most critical need of the Aging Services Network authorized by the OAA.

Other priority areas include research innovation and demonstrations, Native American services, local planning and development, supports for those suffering from dementias and social isolation, legal services, nutrition, in-home supportive services, disease prevention and health promotion, multigenerational collaboration, and family caregiver supports. We appreciate that both the House and Senate proposals to reauthorize the OAA have preserved the numerous ways in which this Act works so well at the federal, state, and local level, on behalf of the older adults and caregivers for whom it is a lifeline to dignity, independence, health, safety, and economic security.

Thank you for your commitment to this important issue. The undersigned organizations represent a diverse set of stakeholders, and we stand ready to build upon existing momentum to swiftly advance a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act through the full Senate and to the President's desk.

Sincerely,

AARP

Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy (a component of the American Physical Therapy Association)

ADvancing States

African Americans Against Alzheimer's

Aging and Vision Loss National Coalition

AHEPA Management Company (AMC)

Alliance for Aging Research

Alliance to End Hunger

Allies for Independence

ALS Association

Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

American Association of Service Coordinators  
 American Association on Health and Disability  
 American Geriatrics Society  
 American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA)  
 American Medical Women's Association  
 American Music Therapy Association  
 American Physical Therapy Association  
 American Public Health Association  
 American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)  
 American Society on Aging  
 American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
 Autism Society of America  
 Baylor Scott & White Health  
 Better Medicare Alliance  
 Blinded Veterans Association  
 Bread for the World  
 Caregiver Action Network  
 Caregiver Voices United  
 Caring with Grace, LLC  
 CaringKind, the Heart of Alzheimer's Caregiving  
 Center for Medicare Advocacy  
 Center for Public Representation  
 Center to Advance Palliative Care  
 Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
 Coalition on Human Needs  
 Collective Action Lab  
 CommunicationFIRST  
 Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
 Congressional Hunger Center  
 Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)  
 Daughters of Penelope  
 Dementia Alliance International  
 Easterseals  
 Eisai Inc.  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
 Feeding America  
 Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)  
 Home Instead Senior Care  
 International Association for Indigenous Aging  
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
 Justice in Aging  
 Lakeshore Foundation  
 LEAD Coalition (Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease)  
 LeadingAge  
 Livpact Inc.  
 Lutheran Services in America  
 MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger  
 Meals on Wheels America

Medicare Rights Center  
 Mercy Housing, Inc.  
 Michigan State College of Human Medicine Alzheimer's Alliance  
 National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)  
 National Adult Protective Services Association  
 National Alliance for Caregiving  
 National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)  
 National Association of Activity Professionals  
 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)  
 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
 National Association of Counties  
 National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)  
 National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)  
 National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
 National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
 National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)  
 National Certification Council for Activity Professionals  
 National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)  
 National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
 National Council on Aging  
 National Health Council  
 National Recreation and Park Association  
 National Respite Coalition  
 NETWORK Lobby  
 Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, Inc.  
 PHI  
 Prevent Blindness  
 RESULTS  
 Society for the Blind  
 The American Network of Community Options & Resources (ANCOR)  
 The Episcopal Church  
 The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society  
 The Gerontological Society of America  
 The Jewish Federations of North America  
 Trust for America's Health  
 Union for Reform Judaism  
 United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
 United Spinal Association  
 USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute  
 Village to Village Network  
 VisionServe Alliance  
 Volunteers of America

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
 Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor