



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

November 1, 2007

Dear Senator:

The undersigned 29 organizations – all of which are active participants in the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations – urge you to support the higher of the House and Senate funding levels for Older Americans Act programs in the FY08 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is the backbone of services to America's aging population, helping seniors to stay healthy, independent and in their communities through a wide range of programs, including: home-delivered meals, congregate meals, senior center services, transportation, support for family caregivers, health promotion, community service employment for low-income older workers, and grant programs for Native Americans.

For years, OAA funding has not kept pace with inflation, nor with the growing number of seniors who need its services. OAA funding was essentially frozen from FY02 to FY05, then reduced in FY06, then increased slightly in FY07. The result has been a serious erosion in purchasing power, as well as diminished reach of these effective programs. It is obvious that \$1.8 billion can not go as far today as it did in 2002.

We appreciate your efforts to increase funding for OAA programs in the midst of many other competing priorities, and we are pleased that both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees provided some increases for FY08.

We encourage you work to assure that OAA programs receive the highest possible funding levels in FY08. Specifically we urge you to adopt the following as you resolve the House/Senate differences on OAA funding levels:

- Support the Senate level of \$28 million in Title II for "Choices for Independence" activities (nursing home diversion, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and evidence-based disease prevention).
- Support the House level for Title III-B Supportive Services and Centers, which includes senior transportation, senior centers, adult day services, and in-home services – an increase of \$7 million (2%).
- Support the Senate levels for the Nutrition Programs in Title III – Congregate Meals, Home-Delivered Meals, and the Nutrition Services Incentive Program – an increase of \$40.4 million (5.2%).
- Support the Senate level for the Family Caregiver Support Program – an increase of \$3 million (1.9%).

- Support the House level for the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (in the Department of Labor) – an increase of \$47.3 million which is needed to cover the increase in the federal minimum wage that goes into effect during FY08.
- Support the Senate level for Grants for Native American aging programs in Title VI-A – an increase of \$1.7 million (6.4%). Preserve the House-and-Senate-recommended 3% increase for Title VI-C (Caregiving), which is an extremely modest \$187 thousand.
- Support the Senate level for Title VII Ombudsman/Elder Abuse Prevention programs – an increase of \$1 million (5.2%).

Thank you for considering these requests. We are counting on your leadership to provide the funding increases that will enable seniors in our communities to benefit from these vital sources of support.

Sincerely,

AFSCME Retiree Program
AFT Program on Retirement and Retirees
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association for International Aging
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Geriatrics Society
American Society on Aging
B'nai B'rith International
Experience Works
International Union, United Auto Workers
Meals On Wheels Association of America
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State Ombudsman Programs
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging
National Indian Council on Aging
National Osteoporosis Foundation
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
United Jewish Communities