

September 15, 2011



William (Larry) Minnix, Jr., Chair

As the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and President Obama address America's financial problems, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) presents to our nation's policy makers our recommendations for people to support, programs to protect, and ideas to reject. The LCAO's recommendations are based on three major principles.

Firstly, LCAO advocates for current and future generations of seniors and those who support them. The current senior generation, whose needs are our uppermost concern, are the people who managed our country through the Great Depression and World War II. These seniors saved the world from totalitarianism, created the middle class and made it possible for future generations to have a better life. They accomplished these things based on shared values, hard work, and shared sacrifice. They helped create our nation's health, education, and social infrastructure to secure what our founders called "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." These programs—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, low income housing, equal opportunity—to which all Americans are now "entitled," are more important than ever for an aging population.

Therefore, "entitlement" is not a bad word. Too often, the implication is that people who are "entitled" did not earn it. Seniors are entitled because they did earn it. Children are entitled because they will earn it if we help them be successful. Caregivers are entitled because they help fulfill daily responsibilities of job and family support and pay taxes. Others are entitled because they are people all Americans have a responsibility to help.

Secondly, LCAO believes that significant savings can be achieved through innovation. There are many ways that cost savings can accrue through more efficient coordination of important programs like Medicare, Medicaid, housing, and home and community services. We believe that CLASS provisions represent the only alternative to the financing of long-term services and supports that give all workers a chance to voluntarily insure against substantial risk and save Medicaid dollars. CLASS offers hope for saving health care dollars for future generations. The Affordable Care Act catalyses innovation.

Thirdly, LCAO supports a balanced approach to deficit reduction that includes budget savings from increases in revenue along with thoughtful targeted reductions in spending. Shared sacrifice and helping those less fortunate is the responsibility of all capable Americans.

LCAO believes that the late Senator Hubert Humphrey had it right...

"It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." *Hubert H. Humphrey*

The difficult policy work ahead of all of us should be based on investment in people first, protection of the vulnerable, giving a helping hand to future generations, and helping the American family live in a stable economic environment. Our specific attached recommendations are based on these beliefs.

Sincerely,



William L. Minnix, Jr.
Chair