



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

September 9, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor/HHS/Education
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor/HHS/Education
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) thank you for your efforts to adequately fund the programs that help older Americans get the support they need to age successfully at home and in their community. To that end, **we greatly appreciate the increases to Older Americans Act programs and services that your subcommittee included in its FY 2011 Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill.**

LCAO is a coalition of 64 national not-for-profit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's 87 million people over 50. With a strong commitment to social justice and fiscal responsibility, the coalition serves as a source of information about issues affecting older persons and provides leadership and vision as America meets the challenges and opportunities presented by its aging society.

As you know, the Older Americans Act (OAA) is the backbone of the nation's long-term care system, providing older adults with much needed services that include home care, congregate and home-delivered meals, adult day care, case management, transportation, caregiver support programs, legal services and long-term care ombudsmen, among other essential services.

For years, OAA funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growing population of individuals eligible for services, yet demand by at-risk older adults in need of supportive services has risen and will only continue to rise with the growth in the aging population. The economic downturn has further compounded the problem. As you may know, LCAO has advocated for at least a 12 percent increase in all OAA programs in FY 2011.

Your bill's real investment in the OAA via a \$143 million increase over FY 2010 for the Administration on Aging goes a long way toward that goal. We greatly appreciate your funding of the Administration's Caregiver Initiative (with significant increases to Older Americans Act Titles III B, III E, Title VI and the non-OAA Lifespan Respite Program), which will significantly boost resources and supports for family caregivers across the country.

We also appreciate your continued support for OAA Title III C home-delivered and congregate meals with increases above the President's request. And thank you for not overlooking the small but mighty Title VII; your \$2.4 million increase will go a long way to preventing elder abuse and increasing the ability of long-term care ombudsmen to protect vulnerable older adults.

We hope that as the Senate bill is reconciled with the House proposal that you incorporate that chamber's proposed increase for the Senior Community Service Employment Program administered by the Department of Labor. As you know, older adults are also facing record rates of unemployment and SCSEP is the only employment and training program serving Americans age 55 and older.

When Congress reconvenes in September, we hope that you will be able to finish the FY 2011 Labor/HHS/Education spending bill at the highest possible levels for Older Americans Act programs and services. Recent economic pressures have only exacerbated an already strained situation, with the Aging Network struggling to meet the needs of current elders, even as new clients seek assistance in ever-greater numbers—increased federal funding is essential now, more than ever.

We are counting on your leadership to provide the funding needed to allow elders in our communities to benefit from these vital sources of support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

AFSCME Retirees
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Society on Aging
Association of BellTel Retirees, Inc.
B'nai B'rith International
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Easter Seals
Experience Works
The Gerontological Society of America
The Jewish Federations of North America
Meals On Wheels Association of America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Adult Day Services Association
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR)
National Council on Aging
National Osteoporosis Foundation
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Senior Corps Association
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
PHI - Quality Care Through Quality Jobs
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
Volunteers of America
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement

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