



# Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

January 14, 2010

Dear Senator,

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) would like to take this opportunity to express our strong support for efforts underway in Congress to provide America's seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities with \$250 in economic relief in 2010. Founded in 1977, the LCAO is a coalition of aging-related organizations concerned about the well-being of older Americans.

As you know, the United States continues to grapple with the effects of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. And like many individuals throughout our country today, millions of older Americans are struggling financially because of this crisis. Many seniors, however, face economic hardships that are unique to their age group.

For instance, older Americans spend a significant amount of their out-of-pocket costs – nearly 30 percent on average – on health care and prescription drugs, and prices for these items have far outpaced overall inflation. In addition, many seniors have seen their retirement nest eggs decimated over the past year and a half and the values of their homes have declined substantially. Because of their age, however, older Americans have little time to recoup their losses in these important retirement assets.

To make matters worse, the Social Security Administration recently announced that, for the first time in over thirty years, there would be no automatic cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for beneficiaries in 2010. Alarming, about one-quarter of our nation's seniors rely on Social Security as virtually their only source of retirement income and the average Social Security benefit is approximately \$12,500 a year. Without next year's COLA, many seniors will find it more difficult to purchase basic necessities, heat their homes and pay for their medications.

As such, the LCAO believes that Congress should provide much-needed economic relief to older Americans who are struggling to make ends meet during these difficult times. In addition to providing assistance to millions of older Americans who need it, the \$250 emergency relief will have a stimulative effect on the U.S. economy. As you may know, seniors are more likely than any other age group to spend the economic relief money they receive. In addition, there are over one million federal, state and local government retirees that are not eligible to receive Social Security. Like other older Americans, we believe such retired public employees should receive equivalent relief.

In closing, the LCAO urges Congress to provide America's seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities with \$250 in economic relief in 2010. The LCAO looks forward to

working with members of Congress to aid in the bipartisan passage of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

AARP  
AFSCME Retirees  
Alliance for Retired Americans  
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging  
American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement and Retirees  
Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
B'nai B'rith International  
Easter Seals  
Gray Panthers  
Military Officers Association of America  
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association  
National Alliance for Caregiving  
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs  
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs  
National Association of State Units on Aging  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Council on Aging  
National Indian Council on Aging  
National Senior Corps Association  
NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care  
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women  
SAGE: Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders  
The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers  
Volunteers of America  
Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)