



# Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

*William (Larry) Minnix, Jr., Chair*

March 28, 2012

The Honorable Denny Rehberg  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor/HHS/Education  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor/HHS/Education  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro/Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

As your Subcommittees consider the FY 2013 Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill in the coming months, the undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) urge you to make investments in Older Americans Act (OAA) programs that enhance the dignity, health and independence of older adults.

LCAO is a coalition of 66 national not-for-profit organizations dedicated to preserving and strengthening the well-being of America's older population. 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 is the backbone of the nation's long-term services and supports system, providing older adults with much-needed services that include home care, congregate and home delivered meals, case management, caregiver support, legal services, transportation, elder abuse prevention, job training and employment opportunities for low-income older adults, among other vital services. It also funds the long-term care ombudsman program, which helps resolve complaints in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and protects the rights of those vulnerable residents.

For over forty years, OAA programs have demonstrated a unique ability to provide these quality services while enhancing and protecting federal resources. OAA programs represent less than 0.2% of federal discretionary spending, but offer an incredible return on investment by leveraging state, local and private dollars, creating private-public partnerships that offer older adults a range of options to help them age in place. These programs help prevent unnecessary hospital and nursing home stays and assist in coordinating care to promote better efficiencies in the health care system.

LCAO, our members, and the millions of older adults we collectively represent, are deeply concerned about stagnant federal funding levels and forecasted cuts to OAA programs while needs and demands are increasing at unprecedented levels. In addition, LCAO is concerned that the trend of inadequate funding will take an even sharper turn for the worse on January 1, 2013, if the sequester is enacted.

As you know, the bulk of sequestration savings come from discretionary programs. ***All OAA programs will be subject to the hatchet of the sequester*** as part of automatic non-defense, discretionary reductions. Under a sequester, older Americans who receive OAA services will directly shoulder those projected cuts, as years of stagnant funding and state budget cuts have already squeezed the administrative and operating costs of OAA agencies and providers. In order to reach the required \$55 billion in reductions, older adults currently receiving in-home care, home-delivered and congregate meals, rides to the doctor and a range of other supportive services will pay the price with reduced access to the help they need to live independently.

The momentum is intensifying toward unprecedented reductions in discretionary programs' funding. Older Americans are relying on your leadership to protect OAA programs and we urge you to fund OAA programs at a level that:

- **protects them from potential cuts in a sequester;**
- **restores funding to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Program Innovations, and Alzheimer's disease programs, all of which endured cuts in the past two years; and**
- **accounts for the economic and demographic forces that are growing demand for these aging services.**

Please refer to the LCAO response to the President's budget (AoA programs begin on page 2) for additional information:

[http://lcao.org/docs/LCAO\\_Budget\\_Letter\\_to\\_Members\\_of\\_Congress\\_3\\_13\\_12.pdf](http://lcao.org/docs/LCAO_Budget_Letter_to_Members_of_Congress_3_13_12.pdf).

As you will see, we ask you to provide funding for elder falls prevention, to be administered by the Administration on Aging in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control. We hope your appropriations request will reflect first-time funding for the Elder Justice Act. Please also note that LCAO strongly supports the transfer of administrative authority for the State Health Insurance and Assistance Programs (SHIPS) from CMS to AoA to maximize program efficiency.

We can only imagine the tremendous pressure you face in preparing your priorities for federal spending. Without your investment in these programs, the valuable services that shelter older Americans against hunger, isolation, ill health, neglect, abuse, unemployment, and other challenges, will fail to reach the aging population.

Under your leadership, LCAO hopes that in FY 2013, that all OAA programs will be funded at a level that protects and strengthens them so they may meet an ever growing demand for services.

Please contact LCAO, at [LCAO@LeadingAge.org](mailto:LCAO@LeadingAge.org), or at (202) 783-2242, should you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

American Association for International Aging (AAIA)  
American Society on Aging (ASA)  
Association of Belltel Retirees, Inc.  
Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (AGHDBCUI)  
Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)  
Easter Seals  
Experience Works  
Gray Panthers  
The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
LeadingAge

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Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)  
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA)  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)  
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM)  
National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors, Inc. (NARSVPD)  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)  
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD)  
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. (NCBA)  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM)  
The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Council on Aging (NCOA)  
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)  
OWL-The Voice of Midlife and Older Women  
PHI-Quality Care *Through* Quality Jobs  
Senior Service America, Inc.  
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)  
Wider Opportunities for Women