



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

William (Larry) Minnix, Jr., Chair

January 30, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) strongly opposes H.R. 1173, legislation to repeal the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) program. Please do not support this bill when it comes to the House floor this week.

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of 66 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

We support the CLASS program as a promising means of effectively financing the long-term services and supports that thousands of Americans come to need as they age or develop a disability. Every family faces these potential costs. CLASS gives families a framework for responsibly planning for their own long-term services and supports needs.

Our currently fragmented system of paying for long-term services and supports is in danger of crumbling under the weight of the baby boom generation. Already an estimated 10 million Americans need long-term services and supports, and this number is projected to increase to 26 million by 2050. Acknowledging the growing demand for services, the law also created the Personal Care Attendants Workforce Advisory Panel, work which must move forward if we are to build the strong workforce that America needs to provide personal care services.

CLASS was developed to provide a coordinated, national public-private system for delivering long-term services and supports. Nearly half of all funding for these services is now provided through Medicaid, which is a growing burden on states and requires individuals to become and remain poor to receive the help they need. There is also an institutional bias in Medicaid whereby approximately two-thirds of all spending is directed towards nursing homes and other institutions instead of preferred community-based services and supports.

CLASS is a promising approach to effectively meeting the costs of long-term services and supports. Thousands of Americans do not qualify for private long-term care insurance due to underwriting practices, and this kind of insurance is unaffordable for many more. Reverse mortgages assume home ownership with substantial equity, which excludes thousands more individuals and families.

There is no effective and affordable alternative to CLASS at this time. We urge you to vote against H.R. 1173 when it comes to a vote this week in the House.

Sincerely,



William L. Minnix, Jr.
President and CEO
Chair, LCAO