



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Max Richtman, Chair

July 27, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of
Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Representatives
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip, U.S. House of
Representatives
H-148 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McCarthy and Minority Whip Hoyer:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of more than 70 national nonprofit organizations dedicated to preserving and strengthening the well-being of America's older population. We provide a voice for seniors and their families in the ongoing national debate on aging policy. We write today about the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA).

On July 16, the Senate passed S. 192, the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2015, under unanimous consent. LCAO strongly supports this bipartisan measure, and the undersigned organizations urge you to bring S.192 to the full House of Representatives for consideration. In particular, we ask you to consider bringing the bill to the floor on the suspension calendar before the House begins its summer recess. Passage this month would build upon the unanimous support S. 192 received in the Senate, appropriately acknowledging the 50th anniversary of this crucial legislation and your dedication to improving the lives of America's seniors.

Since 1965, the OAA has been essential to developing, coordinating, and delivering home and community-based services that help older adults age with independence and dignity in their homes and communities. Many individuals served by OAA-funded programs are at significant

risk of hunger, isolation, and losing their ability to live with health and independence. OAA-supported programs such as home-delivered and congregate meals, transportation services, caregiver assistance, and elder abuse protections are just some of the vital services the OAA provides to more than 11 million seniors and caregivers annually. The OAA also includes the Senior Community Service Employment Program, the only federal workforce program targeted to help low-income older adults prepare for and obtain employment in the community, and a long-term care ombudsman program that advocates for seniors who live in long-term care facilities.

By keeping seniors healthy and in their communities, OAA programs delay, decrease and can prevent the need for more expensive institutional care—such as that paid for through Medicare and Medicaid—by reducing readmission rates, improving care coordination and managing care transitions. Through promoting these efficiencies and more within the health care system, OAA programs effectively save taxpayer dollars and improve our country’s fiscal future.

S.192 is a bipartisan bill with 27 Senate co-sponsors that includes modest changes to key OAA programs, updates important definitions, and makes thoughtful adjustments designed to reflect today’s realities. Given the importance of OAA programs to older adults, families, and caregivers across the country, we urge you consider bringing this bipartisan bill to the House floor. Unauthorized since 2011, the OAA and those who rely on its services can no longer wait. We urge you to act now to ensure the sustainability of OAA programs as well as the health, dignity, and independence of America’s seniors. We urge you to reaffirm your commitment to current and future seniors by reauthorizing the OAA in July, a fitting time frame to honor a half century of the OAA, its successes, and the vulnerable populations it serves.

LCAO has played a significant leadership role in past reauthorizations, and we stand ready to work with you to build upon the success of the OAA in the current reauthorization process and beyond.

Sincerely,

Association for Gerontology and Human Development
in Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Aging Life Care Association
Alzheimer's Foundation of America
American Foundation for the Blind
American Society on Aging
American Postal Workers Union Retirees
Association of Jewish Aging Services

Center for Elder Care and Advanced Illness--Altarum Institute
Easter Seals
The Gerontological Society of America
The Jewish Federations of North America
Justice in Aging
Lutheran Services in America
Meals on Wheels America
Medicare Rights Center
Military Officers Association of America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Adult Day Services 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 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors, Inc.
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of States United for Aging & Disabilities
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council on Aging
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Senior Corps Association
Senior Service America, Inc.
Social Security Works
Visiting Nurse Associations of America
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement

cc: The Honorable John P. Kline, Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training
The Honorable Ruben Hinojosa, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training