



Leadership Council
of Aging Organizations

Chair, Max Richtman

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority
Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority
Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority
Leader
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), I am writing to urge you to prioritize the health, economic and social welfare needs of vulnerable seniors as you consider legislation providing more economic relief and additional measures to address the public health emergency as the number of individuals infected by COVID-19 continues to surge. LCAO is a coalition of 69 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

While our members were grateful for the Coronavirus Aide Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, much more is needed to support older Americans facing dual health and economic crises.

The adoption of social distancing and other infection prevention measures by seniors, caregivers, nursing home staff, and health care providers has helped slow the rate of new infections for older adults. However, surging infection rates among the young means the potential for seniors to come into contact with infected individuals is rising. Already about [one-third of all COVID-19 fatalities](#) have been nursing home residents or workers and 80 percent of all deaths have been to adults over the age of 65¹, and older adults of color and their families are experiencing disproportionate illness and death from COVID-19 in nursing homes and the general population.

Congress must do more to ensure that vulnerable older populations, and all health care and social service workers, receive sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE). The workers needing PPE include direct care workers, long term services and support providers, mental health providers, and aging network and senior housing providers, who provide on-site, or in-home health care or social services to older adults and people with disabilities. **Congress must allocate sufficient funding—reflecting the recent surge in infections—and create a strategy for mass production of test kits and PPE and a process for distribution to prevent shortages.**

Congress must also consider additional funding needed for core programs that protect the health and well-being of older Americans and their families. We urge Congress improve Social Security and Medicare benefits and to provide extra funding for Medicaid, Medicare and Older Americans Act programs to address urgent economic, health and social welfare needs created by the pandemic.

On April 8, 2020, LCAO sent a letter to congressional leaders outlining the unmet needs for the full network of services and programs that America's seniors rely on to remain safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We provided detailed funding recommendations for future COVID relief legislation under three broad categories of housing and related services, income security, and access to health and community services.

We urge Congress to adopt these recommendations in legislation providing further pandemic relief as outlined in the attached summary of our April 8 letter. Also included are letters in support of expanding Medicaid FMAP, providing funds to nursing homes (ACCESS Act), and temporarily expanding COBRA to support worker health coverage during the pandemic. Thank you for considering these recommendations to serve and protect older Americans.

Sincerely,



Max Richtman
LCAO Chairman

CC:

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chair, House Education and Labor Committee
 The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee
 The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr., Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
 The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee
 The Honorable Richard E. Neal, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
 The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee
 The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
 The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking member, House Appropriations Committee
 The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Chair, House Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services
 The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services
 The Honorable Maxine Waters, Chair, House Financial Services Committee
 The Honorable Patrick McHenry, Ranking member, House Financial Services Committee
 The Honorable Wm. Lacy Clay, Chair, House Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance
 The Honorable Steven E. Stivers, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
 The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
 The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
 The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, and Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee
 The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
 The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
 The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair, Senate HELP Committee
 The Honorable Michael Crapo, Chair, Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee
 The Honorable Sherrod Brown, Ranking Member, Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee
 The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Special Committee on Aging
 The Honorable Bob Casey, Ranking Member, Senate Special Committee on Aging

ⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>