



Leadership Council  
of Aging Organizations

***Katie Smith Sloan, Chair***

September 10, 2021

Senator Ron Wyden  
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Richard Neal  
Chairman, House Ways and Means  
Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Wyden and Neal,

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (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. LCAO commends your commitment to providing funding and support for Adult Protective Services (APS) programs and the long-term care ombudsman program throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To build upon these efforts to help address the needs of our nation's aging population, we are writing in support of S.2674/H.R.4969, the Elder Justice Reauthorization and Modernization Act of 2021.

This comprehensive reauthorization bill would advance key solutions to the crisis of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation in our nation. These solutions include the ultimate creation and funding of a coordinated elder justice infrastructure in the United States. Additionally, by providing significant, transformational levels of funding for APS and the long-term care ombudsman program, this legislation would greatly enhance these services for older adults, particularly through the first-time provision of APS grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

The legislation also creates innovative solutions for our nation's long-term care staffing crisis through providing \$1.6 billion over the life of the reauthorization for worker recruitment and retention incentives, including in Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

It further funds programs that address social isolation and loneliness. Currently, many of these programs are provided by the national network of aging services providers, but they need more resources, particularly in the era of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation would also support the services of medical-legal partnerships and expand the work of senior legal hotlines for underserved older adults.

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The introduction of this reauthorization and modernization of the Elder Justice Act comes at a pivotal time for the United States; our population is aging, and more older adults are affected by elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation every day. Isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the risk. We must stop this crisis now. This legislation, which is the most comprehensive elder justice legislation introduced since the original Elder Justice Act, would significantly advance this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Katie Smith Sloan, Chair