



Leadership Council  
of Aging Organizations

***Debra Whitman, Chair***

December 4, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
The Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of 68 national nonprofit organizations promoting the interests and well-being of older adults in policymaking. Older Americans Act (OAA) programs are a crucial piece of the federal network of support for older adults and their families. We write to you today applauding the current movement towards reauthorization and encouraging passage by the end of the Congressional session.

LCAO supports bipartisan reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. We thank the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions and the Senate Special Committee on Aging for their efforts to develop bipartisan legislation informed by the field. We commend Chairman Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member Bill Cassidy, and Senators Bob Casey, Tim Kaine, Susan Collins, Markwayne Mullin, and Edward Markey for their leadership in particular given their role as members of the bipartisan working group within the HELP Committee.

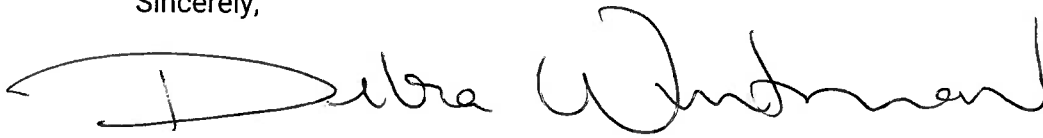
Prompt action is needed by Congress to ensure the sustainability of OAA programs, as well as the dignity and independence of older Americans and their families served by these programs. The OAA is essential to building effective and efficient home and community-based services to help older adults age well in the setting of their choice. Programs ranging from transportation to home-delivered and congregate meals to caregiver support help promote healthy aging, prevent social isolation and loneliness, sustain independence and dignity, and avoid unnecessary health care costs. Since 1965, the OAA has supported such programs to meet the needs of older Americans and empower them to live and remain active in their communities. We urge Congress to build on that legacy.

In January 2024, LCAO recommended several key priorities to guide reauthorization of the

Older Americans Act. We note a need for a bold investment to build on past evidence of cost-effective programs and include authorization levels that meet the needs of the growing number of adults who rely upon these programs. LCAO supports promotion of innovation and flexibility within the Act, urging Congress to learn from the field what a modern OAA should look like. We recommend attention to diversity and equity to ensure the OAA is targeting those most in need of its services and supports. Finally, the OAA has benefited from a long history of bipartisan support and bill development that prioritizes the needs of older adults and their caregivers.

LCAO commends the Senate HELP Committee for bipartisan work and inclusion of stakeholder input, including from LCAO members. **We urge timely consideration and passage by the House and Senate on OAA reauthorization before the end of this session of Congress.** Updating this landmark law in advance of its 60th anniversary in 2025, is in the best interests of the older adults and caregivers nationwide. LCAO looks forward to working with your committees on this and other policy matters affecting our rapidly aging nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Whitman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D" that extends to the left.

Debra Whitman, Chair, LCAO