



MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA COMMENDS PASSAGE OF FY17 OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL; CALLS FOR INCREASES IN FY18

Arlington, VA, May 4, 2017 – Following the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to fund government programs for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017, Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander released this statement:

I commend Congress for passing the bipartisan Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, which helps to ease the burden of funding uncertainty for Meals on Wheels programs across the country through the end of the current fiscal year. This \$1.1 trillion omnibus funding bill includes a \$3 million increase for Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs – both congregate and home-delivered. This legislation also provides level funding for the Social Services, Community Services and Community Development Block Grants for the next five months of Fiscal Year 2017 that support a number of Meals on Wheels programs.

At a time when lawmakers are still deeply divided over the role of the federal government, and amid existing fiscal restrictions that make it difficult for Congress to provide any increases, we recognize the compromises made to reach this funding agreement. We thank those Members of Congress who pushed to protect and increase funding for OAA Nutrition Programs – especially House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, and the [45+ Representatives](#) and [30+ Senators](#) who called for increases early in the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations process. We are grateful for the support of the leaders of both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for recognizing the need for increased investments, and the social and economic returns Meals on Wheels programs are delivering every day.

Though we are pleased to see OAA funding increases in the Fiscal Year 2017 Omnibus Bill, we know that these modest increases are not enough to close our nation's growing gap between seniors in need and seniors served. We urge Congress to build on the bipartisan and bicameral support for OAA Nutrition Programs – Congregate, Home-Delivered and the Nutrition Services Incentive Program – by increasing funding to a total level of \$874.6 million in Fiscal Year 2018, which represents the authorized funding levels that were unanimously passed by Congress last year.

All vulnerable seniors should have access to nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to enable them to live in their own homes and out of far more costly healthcare settings; yet, senior nutrition programs that rely on OAA funding are serving 23 million fewer meals today than in 2005. While waiting lists mount in every state, the number of seniors threatened by hunger will only worsen if current funding levels are not adequately boosted, the consequences of which will be far greater taxpayer burden. We look forward to working in a bipartisan manner with both chambers to increase this funding in Fiscal Year 2018.

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