

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

Thank you for your ongoing support for programs that help older Americans live active and independent lives. As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 appropriations bill for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, we urge you to prioritize programs within the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) budget for the Administration on Aging (AoA). These programs under Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA) help older Americans age successfully at home and in their communities. To more adequately address the needs of a rapidly growing aging and caregiving population, we request FY 2021 funding levels that align with H.R. 4334, the Dignity in Aging Act of 2019, which reauthorizes OAA programs and recently passed the House with broad bipartisan support.

Over the years, OAA programs have served an essential role in advancing the health and well-being of older adults. These programs provide millions of American seniors, many of whom are low-income, the services necessary to reduce hunger and isolation while maintaining their dignity, health, and independence. The services provided through the OAA enable seniors to live in their own homes while saving taxpayer dollars through reduced hospital and institutional care.

OAA Title III B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services (HCBS):

The Home and Community-Based Supportive Services program authorized in Title III, Part B, of the Older Americans Act (OAA) provides critical resources to states and local Area Agencies on Aging. Community-based agencies rely on these resources to offer an array of supportive services that are essential to keeping older adults in their homes and communities, including in-home assistance and wrap-around services, adult day care, transportation services including to meal sites and medical appointments, access to legal assistance and elder justice assistance, case management and care coordination services, and many others. Title III B services are essential to providing access to other OAA programs, such as congregate and home-delivered meals, for many older adults and caregivers. Overall, Title III, Part B, funding is used to deliver more than 20 distinctive services to help older adults and caregivers.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that you appropriate for the HCBS program \$437.8 million, which mirrors the funding authorized by H.R. 4334. When older adults are able to live independently, our country's communities are strengthened and taxpayers and families avoid paying for more expensive acute health care and long-term care services.

OAA Title III C Congregate Nutrition Services and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services:

In 2018, nearly 2.4 million economically and socially vulnerable seniors received almost 74 million nutritious meals at senior centers or other local community organizations and 147 million meals delivered to their homes by public-private partnerships like Meals on Wheels. For most of these seniors, the meals provided about one-half or more of their food for the entire day. These programs, however, are more than just food. Home-delivered nutrition services often provide participants their only opportunity for face-to-face contact or conversation, and more than three-fourths of congregate meal participants report that their health has improved because they attend lunch programs.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully request the subcommittee include a total level of \$1.031 billion for the OAA Nutrition Program, which includes the individual Congregate and Home-Delivered programs and reflects the funding levels that would be authorized under H.R. 4334 as passed by the House. These vital services authorized under the Older Americans Act help fulfill our nation's commitment to maintaining dignity and independent living regardless of income or location.

OAA Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP):

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) offers a range of supports to family caregivers, including assistance in accessing services such as respite care, counseling, support groups, and caregiver training. Every year, caregivers provide nearly a half-trillion dollars' worth of unpaid care to older adults and people with disabilities. The NFCSP is the only nationwide program that provides essential supports, delivered through the Aging Network via state and local agencies, to informal caregivers who are an essential component to long-term care delivery in the country. We request that you fund OAA Title III, Part E at \$206 million, again the amount authorized in H.R. 4334.


Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to working with you to make sure America's older adults receive the supportive services they need to live independently.

Sincerely,


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress


Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress


Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

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March 13, 2020

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