



May 23, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Biden and Speaker McCarthy:

As negotiations to raise the debt limit and address federal spending continue, vulnerable older adults served through the Older Americans Act (OAA) are worried about whether they may lose access to daily, nutritious meals. These are citizens who have worked their entire lives in service to this great nation, as veterans, teachers, fire fighters, postal workers and the list goes on and on. They are now counting on us to be there for them in their time of need to ensure they can age with dignity and independence. We implore you to remember them as you consider funding levels that do no harm to senior nutrition programs like Meals on Wheels.

If a final agreement must include caps on federal spending, we strongly urge that the baseline be current funding levels, at a minimum. The difference between Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations could mean more than a million older adults no longer receiving meals through the OAA Nutrition Program. For some, these services provide their only meal of the day.

Meals on Wheels, as a long-standing and successful public-private partnership, has always had bipartisan, bicameral support. There is no viable alternative source of nutrition and social connection for the growing number of seniors who rely on these services. Community-based senior nutrition programs enable 2.8 million to live at home and out of far more costly healthcare settings, saving billions of taxpayer dollars annually. That's because we can provide a senior with Meals on Wheels for an entire year for roughly the same cost as one day in the hospital or ten days in a nursing home, saving dollars and lives.

As decisions loom, we urge you to steer clear of any policies that would increase hunger or threaten the health and well-being of older adults in the greatest social and economic need. The consequences would be dire.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ellie Hollander'.

Ellie Hollander  
President and CEO  
Meals on Wheels America

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Robert B. Blancato'.

Robert B. Blancato  
Executive Director  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging  
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cc: Senate Majority Leader Schumer; Senate Minority Leader McConnell; House Minority Leader Jeffries