

October 28, 2019

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
The Hon. Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Bobby Scott, Chairman
The Hon. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

On behalf of the undersigned 72 national organizations with a vested interest in the well-being of America's older adults and caregivers, we write to you today in support of the House-proposed *Dignity in Aging Act* (H.R. 4334) to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). We urge Members of the House to support this important five-year OAA reauthorization. Reauthorization of this critical Act, which expired on September 30, will ensure the sustainability of vital OAA programs, as well as the health, dignity, and independence of older Americans and their caregivers.

The OAA is essential to developing, coordinating, and delivering home and community-based services that help older adults age with independence and dignity. Many individuals served by OAA-funded programs are at significant risk of hunger, isolation, abuse, and losing their ability to live with health and independence. OAA-supported programs are provided to more than 11 million seniors and their caregivers annually. These vital supports include, but are not limited to, home-delivered and congregate nutrition services, in-home supportive services, multipurpose senior centers, transportation, caregiver support, disease prevention and health promotion, community service employment, the long-term care ombudsman program, and services to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults.

By keeping seniors healthy and in their communities for more than 50 years, OAA programs have delayed or prevented the need for more expensive institutional care for many older adults, which is often paid for through Medicare or Medicaid. OAA services can effectively save taxpayer, state, and federal dollars. In addition to helping older adults age in place where they most often want to be, OAA programs have improved our country's fiscal future and promoted efficiencies within the health care system by preventing unnecessary hospital stays, reducing readmission rates, coordinating care, and managing care transitions.

We appreciate that the *Dignity in Aging Act*, H.R. 4334 builds upon the early bipartisan Senate draft bill and incorporates a number of important priorities articulated by stakeholder organizations. Most importantly, the *Dignity in Aging Act* calls for much-needed and necessary investments in the OAA by increasing funding

authorizations over the next five years—a top priority of the undersigned organizations and the most critical need of the Aging Services Network authorized by the OAA.

Other priority areas include research innovation and demonstrations, Native American services, local planning and development, supports for those suffering from dementias and social isolation, legal services, nutrition, in-home supportive services, disease prevention and health promotion, multigenerational collaboration, and family caregiver supports. We appreciate that the House proposal to reauthorize the OAA has preserved the numerous ways in which this Act works so well at the federal, state, and local levels, on behalf of the older adults and caregivers for whom it is a lifeline to dignity, independence, health, safety, and economic security.

Thank you for your commitment to this important issue. The undersigned organizations represent a diverse set of stakeholders, and we urge Members of the House to swiftly advance this bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act.

Sincerely,

AARP

Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy

ADvancing States

Aging and Vision Loss National Coalition

AHEPA Management Company (AMC)

Alliance for Aging Research

Alliance for Retired Americans

Alliance to End Hunger

Allies for Independence

Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement

American Association of Service Coordinators

American Association on Health and Disability

American Geriatrics Society

American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA)

American Music Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)

American Society on Aging

Blinded Veterans Association

Bread for the World

Caregiver Action Network

Caregiver Voices United

Caring with Grace, LLC

CaringKind, the Heart of Alzheimer's Caregiving

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Center to Advance Palliative Care

Collective Action Lab

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
Daughters of Penelope
Dementia Alliance International
Easterseals
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Feeding America
Home Instead Senior Care
International Association for Indigenous Aging
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Justice in Aging
Lakeshore Foundation
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Meals on Wheels America
Medicare Rights Center
Mercy Housing, Inc.
Michigan State College of Human Medicine Alzheimer's Alliance
National Adult Protective Services Association
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)
National Association of Activity Professionals
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
National Association of Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Certification Council for Activity Professionals
National Council on Aging
National Health Council
National Recreation and Park Association
National Respite Coalition
NETWORK Lobby
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, Inc.
PHI
RESULTS
Society for the Blind
The Gerontological Society of America
The Jewish Federations of North America
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Spinal Association
USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute
Village to Village Network
VisionServe Alliance
Volunteers of America

cc: Members of the United States House of Representatives