

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
of
AGING ORGANIZATIONS

Barbara B. Kennelly, Chair

June 7, 2005

Via Fax and Messenger

Honorable Ralph Regula
Honorable David Obey

As you determine FY 06 spending levels for the agencies under the subcommittee's jurisdiction, the undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) call your attention to the services provided through the Older Americans Act.

We urge you to increase funding for all Administration on Aging programs. OAA spending saves money in the long run. The services provided help older Americans remain independent in their homes and communities, thus avoiding costly institutional care. OAA programs provide a wide range of home and community-based services that include home care, caregiver support, congregate and home-delivered meals, adult day care, transportation, protections against abuse and neglect, senior center, case management, legal counseling, state long-term care ombudsman services, and community service employment programs. For 40 years these services have successfully enhanced the ability of millions of older persons to live independently.

OAA funding, however, has not kept pace with inflation and population growth – effectively being frozen for the past several years. Even with efficient utilization of OAA funds, older adults in communities across the nation are on waiting lists for many essential services, such as home-delivered meals and transportation. These gaps in services have been exacerbated in the last several years by cutbacks in state Medicaid and community-services programs as a result of the fiscal problems states have faced.

We urge you to recognize the growing needs of America's seniors and demonstrate your commitment to strengthening federal support to help ensure their independence and well-being by increasing funding for OAA programs.

Sincerely,

AARP
AFSCME Retiree Program
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alzheimer's Association
American Association for International Aging
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Association for Gerontology and Human Development
American Geriatrics Society
Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America

Eldercare America
Experience Works
Families USA
Gerontological Society of America
Gray Panthers
Meals on Wheels Association of America
Military Officers Association of America
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors, Inc.
National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of States Units on Aging
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on the Aging
National Indian Council on Aging Inc.
OWL, the voice of midlife and older women
Service Employees International Union Retired Members Program
The National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform
United Jewish Communities
Volunteers of America