



241 18th Street S
Suite 403
Arlington, VA 22202
202-898-2578
advancingstates.org

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February 26, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby,
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey,
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-307
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy,
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger,
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Lowey, and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger:

On behalf of ADvancing States, I am writing to you in support of funding for important programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities in the FY2021 appropriations package. ADvancing States is a nonpartisan association of state government agencies that represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities. We work to support visionary state leadership, the advancement of state systems innovation, and the development of national policies that support home and community-based services for older adults and persons with disabilities. Our members administer a wide range of services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities, including overseeing Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services in every state. Together with our members, we work to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering long-term services and supports for people who are older or have a disability and for their caregivers.

In FY2020, the final Congressional Appropriations package maintained important and necessary increases to many OAA programs that serve older adults that were first provided in FY2018. In several cases Congress also provided increases from the FY2018 levels during both FY2019 and FY2020. We appreciate that Congress recognized the importance of these programs for older adults and people with disabilities and we thank you and your colleagues for supporting them. We request that you continue to support the OAA and related aging and disability services at amounts no less than the funding provided in the FY2020 appropriations bill.

Additionally, we wish to highlight three important areas that would benefit from increased investments through the appropriations process. These include Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services authorized by Title III-D of the OAA; research and evaluation under the OAA; and Adult Protective Services and Elder Justice Activities.

Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services in the OAA are a crucial part of the aging network's ability to improve and maintain the overall health and well-being of older adults. These programs include important interventions such as falls prevention, chronic disease self-management, substance-abuse screening and referrals, hypertension management, and many others.¹ Currently, Congress is considering OAA reauthorization and modernization.² Our understanding is that a bipartisan/bicameral compromise has been struck and is likely to be introduced shortly. In this compromise, Congress proposes to add a number of additional areas to the Disease Prevention and Health Promotion service definition in the act, such as prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, screening for immunization status, chronic pain management, screening for suicide risk, services that are a part of responses to a public health emergency or emerging health threat, and several others. These new focus areas will be extremely valuable to states as they promote healthy aging activities, but it is important to recognize that III-D is one of the smallest parts of the OAA as it received \$24.8 million nationally during FY2020. We strongly believe that the addition of additional focus areas should be accompanied by increased appropriations for FY2021 and beyond.

The proposed OAA reauthorization also includes increased research and evaluation capacity for the Administration on Community Living (ACL). Our members are very supportive of this proposal, since we believe that the true value and outcomes of OAA services are often challenging to demonstrate with the current research available. However, the proposal would not provide a dedicated source of funds for the new research center at ACL. We believe that this research should be accompanied by sufficient funding to achieve its purpose and request \$20 million to establish the center in ACL.

We also wish to highlight the ongoing need for investment in Elder Justice activities. We appreciate that Congress has allocated funding for these activities, which totaled \$15.87 million in FY2020. ACL has used these funds for important initiatives, such as increasing the data reporting and analysis capacity of APS and funding Elder Justice Innovation Grants.³ However, there is much more work to be done in this area. Across the country, we continue to see alarming increases in both reported and substantiated cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation.⁴ These trends are exacerbated by the fact that there is no dedicated Federal funding for APS activities and states must cobble together resources from a variety of programs, which leads to challenges with sustainability and program management. We request increased funding for

¹ <https://www.ncoa.org/resources/ebpchart/>

² See H.R.4334 and S.3057

³ <https://acl.gov/programs/elder-justice/elder-justice-innovation-grants-0>

⁴ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/x1g0olwytazs7zp/NASUAD%20Eco%20and%20Demographic%20Trends.pptx?dl=0>



these activities that can be used both to develop and promote innovation and best practices as well as for direct services at the state and local level.

We appreciate the investments that you made in FY2018 through 2020 and request that you continue to support these important programs for older adults and people with disabilities, with an emphasis on increased funding for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services, research and evaluation, and Adult Protective Services and Elder Justice. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Damon Terzaghi at dterzaghi@advancingstates.org or Adam Mosey at amosey@advancingstates.org or 202-898-2578.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Roherty".

Martha Roherty
Executive Director
ADvancing States

Cc: Members of the U.S. Senate
Members of the U.S. House of Representatives