



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Edward F. Coyle, Chair

October 29, 2013

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Sanders, and Burr:

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of 69 national nonprofit organizations representing over 60 million older Americans, thank you for your leadership in crafting the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2013 (S. 1562). This bill is the culmination of a truly bipartisan effort to modernize the Older Americans Act (OAA), and its introduction would not have been possible without your years of leadership, guidance, and engagement.

First signed into law in 1965, the OAA is a primary vehicle for developing, coordinating, and delivering the home and community-based services that help older adults maintain their independence, and when needed, protecting the rights of vulnerable elders, including those residing in long-term care facilities. Since the statute's most recent expiration in 2011, LCAO has urged Congress to continue the tradition of a bipartisan, timely reauthorization that will strengthen the Act and thus improve the lives of the individuals and caregivers it serves. Today, we remain committed to that goal and as such, are pleased to endorse S. 1562.

With our nation's population of older adults projected to grow exponentially in the coming years, so too will grow the corresponding demand on OAA programs. This major influx of older adults will enter an already stressed system, as OAA funding has not kept pace with inflation or population growth for decades. Reauthorization amid these changing demographics and economic realities is crucial to ensure that the successes of the Act can be better leveraged, and that innovation continues to be fostered to meet the needs of current and future seniors. It also enables Congress to reaffirm its support for the Act, and the efforts of the Aging Services Network to empower older adults to retain or improve their health and economic independence so they can remain in their own homes and communities.

We appreciate and respect the bipartisan approach you have taken to reauthorize the OAA, and hope to see this collaborative spirit continue. To preserve this ongoing process, and to allow lawmakers from every state the opportunity to consider S. 1562 as is, we urge the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions to reject proposals that could derail the measure, and to favorably report S. 1562 to the full Senate, without delay.

LCAO has played a significant leadership role in past reauthorizations, and we stand ready to work with you to build upon the successes of the OAA in the current reauthorization process and beyond.

Sincerely,

