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**n4a STATEMENT ON THE DEBT CEILING DEAL**

*Sandy Markwood, CEO, released the following statement*

**Washington, DC** —The debt ceiling legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President, will have far-reaching effects on the future of domestic discretionary programs, such as the Older Americans Act, housing and transportation programs that older Americans depend upon to be able to live safely and independently in their homes and communities. Although, we appreciate the debt ceiling deal spares the entitlement programs from cuts for the time being, it includes provisions that could potentially alter the nature of entitlement programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security for years to come.

While achieving the goal of increasing the debt limit through 2012 and thus allowing the government to pay its bills, the deal takes an unbalanced approach in addressing deficit reduction by not including a single cent of new revenue, putting off the tough decisions, and focusing more than \$900 billion over 10 years in immediate cuts on discretionary programs. While these cuts would include some shared sacrifice—with \$350 billion coming from defense programs—all non-security domestic programs will be at risk as these funding cuts are determined beginning in FY 2012.

Additionally, the deal charges a joint committee to come up with another \$1.5 trillion in budget reductions by November 23 that would be voted by Congress on a strict up-or-down vote. If these recommendations are not agreed to, a trigger or sequestration mechanism would automatically kick in, making across-the-board cuts to programs. The joint committee is authorized to consider making additional cuts to discretionary programs, cuts to entitlements and tax reform changes. As this next phase of the debate begins, n4a urges all aging advocates to urge their Members of Congress to support a more balanced approach to deficit reduction based on shared sacrifice which does not place a disproportionate burden on low-income frail older Americans, who can least afford it.

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**National Association of Area Agencies on Aging**

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*For additional analysis on the debt ceiling deal in the n4a members' section, visit:*  
<http://www.n4a.org/members/legislative-updates/?fa=view-article&id=949>

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