

March 23, 2020 Advocacy Alert



Urge Lawmakers to Support Emergency Funding and Flexibility for the Aging Network Weigh In With Congress NOW!

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As shutdowns and shelter-in-place orders roll out across the country due to the coronavirus pandemic, aging champions in Congress are still urgently advocating to get emergency funding and new flexibility to the Aging Network agencies that are on the front lines of responding to the critical needs of older Americans and their caregivers. Senate and House lawmakers are still working to finalize the next round of bipartisan economic and disaster relief—and n4a is working furiously to ensure that emergency funding for the Aging Network is included in these packages.

Last week Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), the lead Democrat on the Senate Aging Committee, and 22 of his Senate colleagues introduced the **Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act, S. 3544**. This legislation proposes funding at levels previously unseen by the Aging Network. This funding would help local agencies meet many of the pressing needs now being faced by older adults and family caregivers by allocating \$1 billion for OAA Title III B Supportive Services, \$1.65 billion for Title III C2 home-delivered nutrition services, \$185 million for Title III E Family Caregiver Supports and nearly \$16 million for long-term care ombudsman services. Senator Casey's bill would build upon the \$250 million for OAA nutrition services included in the second COVID-19 emergency funding bill (H.R. 6201) that was signed into law last week.

[n4a sent a letter](#) to Senate and House Leaders last week detailing our funding requests and other important priorities to better enable the Aging Network to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, and on Sunday, Senate Republicans released a bill proposing \$350 million in funding for OAA programs. The funding included in the Senate Republican package is a fraction of the nearly \$3 billion Senator Casey requested, but still an important request. House Democrats are working on a proposal that could funnel more than \$1 billion to ACL, including \$200 million for III B Supportive Services, \$100 million for III E and \$20 million for ombudsman activities.

Given these differing proposals, advocacy will be essential to achieve the highest possible funding levels.

We know Aging Network advocates are inundated right now and may have very little time for advocacy. **However, because lawmakers are moving so quickly, please take just a moment TODAY to reach out to your lawmakers to urge them to support additional funding for the Aging Network as part of a third emergency funding package that the Senate and House will consider this week.**

Action Requested:

→ **Call your Members of Congress. If you have time, put your requests in writing** asking your Senators and Representatives to support emergency flexible funding for vital home and community-based services, caregiver supports and nutrition services for older adults affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Reach your Members through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202.224.3121 or find their office number and email on your [Representative's](#) or [Senator's](#) website.

Use n4a's [recent letter to Senate and House leadership](#) as a template or the following script in your conversation or email, but most importantly make sure to tell them why additional flexible funding for OAA and other aging programs is so important for older adults and caregivers in your community.

On behalf of [name of your agency] in [your community], we are funded through the federal Older Americans Act and provide vital services and supports that enable older adults and their caregivers to age with health and dignity in their homes. The critical services that we provide to [Senator's or Representative's] older constituents are needed even more urgently as many older Americans nationwide are being urged to stay at home and self-quarantine as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Emergency funding for [name of your agency] and Area Agencies on Aging and Native American aging programs across the country will be critical as we urgently work to meet the changing and increasing needs of seniors in the wake of this pandemic. For example, [include a short story or example of how the needs in your community are increasing/changing].

We urge [Senator or Representative] to support emergency funding for vital Older Americans Act nutrition, caregiver and supportive services in the next round of emergency funding that we encourage Congress to pass as soon as possible! Specifically, we support the funding levels that Senator Casey and 22 colleagues proposed in the Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act, S. 3544, which he introduced last week. We hope [Senator or Representative] will urge their leadership and colleagues to include emergency funding for services supporting older Americans in the next round of emergency funding legislation.

→ **If you can, ask other advocates to do the same!** Urge colleagues, advisory board members, volunteers and clients to make calls to Members of Congress, as well. **We have an incredibly short window of opportunity while negotiations are ongoing, so your immediate action is urgently needed!**

Also, stay tuned for Aging Network updates about the coronavirus response and resources on [n4a's COVID-19 resource page](#).

If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert* or n4a's policy positions, please contact Autumn Campbell at acampbell@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.