

## July 23, 2020 Advocacy Alert



# The Time For Advocacy For Older Adults Is NOW!

## Senators Stalled on Coronavirus Relief Package

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The pace of coronavirus outbreaks in many states is picking up, and it is clear that states and individual Americans will need continued federal relief during this unprecedented and prolonged crisis. While House lawmakers passed the HEROES Act, a massive, \$3.5 trillion relief package, in May, Senators have delayed debate on an emergency measure until this week, and it is becoming apparent that next steps will be difficult.

Timing is critical, however, as many benefits that were implemented in the March-passed CARES Act are set to expire as soon as next week and emergency funding allocations for a number of federal programs are drying up. With Senate progress stalled, **aging advocates must use this time to continue to influence debate. Your engagement now is critical!**

### Why Is Action Now Critical?

The latest intelligence out of the Senate is that the legislative package that Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) is preparing includes few, if any, critical efforts that would protect older Americans throughout the duration of the pandemic. This expectation directly contradicts what we know are the needs of older Americans that AAAs serve based on n4a's most recent report, [#AAAs At Work for Older Adults: A Snapshot of Area Agencies on Aging Responses to COVID-19](#). While we don't expect the initial Senate package to gain legislative traction, ***it is essential that lawmakers pass a final package that strengthens federal investments in keeping older adults safe in this health and economic emergency.***

n4a's [key priorities](#) for the next COVID-19 relief bill include:

- **Expanding access to Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver programs and community-living options.**

- **Providing another round of [emergency investments](#) in critical older Americans Act programs** that include dedicated **funding to alleviate widespread social isolation and loneliness** among older adults observing stay-at-home orders.
- **Preparing State Health Insurance Assistance Programs to continue supporting the Medicare choices** of beneficiaries through new virtual solutions—both now and during open enrollment.
- **Securing personal protective equipment (PPE)** and other safety supplies for the Aging Network workforce professionals who are delivering vital in-home care to medically vulnerable older adults.

### **Action Requested:**

→ **Please call your Senators and urge local advocates to do the same! This is especially important if you have a Republican Senator(s).** Members of the Senate majority must understand that they cannot leave older Americans out of a next round of coronavirus response.

- **Call the Capitol Switchboard at 202.224.3121** to be connected to your Senator. Once you have your Senator's office on the line, use the following script to explain why you are calling and what you want your Senator to do.  
*Hello, my name is [Your Name] and I am calling from [City, State] to urge Senator [Name] to do everything [he/she] can do to ensure that older Americans are not left behind in the next COVID-19 relief package! Older adults are facing disproportionate risks from the virus. Tragically, nearly 80 percent of COVID-19 deaths have been among adults 65 years and older, and I am very concerned that intelligence about the Senate's next emergency bill seems to ignore older Americans.*

*I hope the Senator will support Senate action to pass a relief bill that specifically helps older adults live safely in their homes by providing supports and services like access to in-home supports and nutrition and to prevent harmful social isolation as a result of the coronavirus crisis.*

*Specifically, I urge Senator [NAME] to:*

- *Support additional federal funding for state Medicaid programs to prevent devastating cuts to the home and community-based services that millions of older adults rely upon to live independently at home—and therefore avoid nursing home placement; and*
- *Support additional federal funding for Older Americans Act programs and the Aging Network's community-based efforts to help prevent and relieve social isolation and loneliness among older adults, which is a widespread and continuing issue during extended stay-at-home recommendations.*

*[Add any detail about why any/all of these asks are vital in your community].*

*In closing, I urge the Senator to insist that the next COVID-19 package support older Americans! Thank you.*

→ **Urge your agency stakeholders and grassroots to call the Senate as well!** Feel free to adapt this alert and its talking points to reflect your advocates and community! No time? At least forward this alert to your colleagues, advisory board members and volunteers and urge them to reach out to their Senators.

→ **If you can do more, use n4a's [social media toolkit](#) to engage your Senators and/or send a more detailed request via email.** Make sure to tag your Senators in your social posts and urge your agency's stakeholders and advocacy network to do the same. If you can send an email, use n4a's updated [template](#). Find how to email them on your [Senator's](#) website.

→ **If you know that your Senator(s) already supports these critical priorities,** ask them to contact their party leadership (either Majority Leader Mitch McConnell or Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY) to insist that these critical policies are included in the next round of COVID-19 relief!

***It is very important that advocates get loud to urge Senators to act to continue to support older Americans in the wake of the unprecedented coronavirus crisis!*** Without a sense of urgency, any action the Senate takes may be insufficient to meet the escalating needs.

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