

April 13, 2021 Advocacy Alert



Support OAA and SHIP Funding! CALL Your Representatives TODAY and Urge Them to Sign On to FY 2022 Funding Letters

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This week we have **TWO letters** circulated by congressional champions urging their colleagues to support essential funding for older adults and their caregivers. **Your advocacy is needed today!** Reach out to your Representatives as they consider FY 2022 spending to encourage them to sign on and invest in these critical programs and services.

Last week we shared an [Advocacy Alert](#) encouraging you to ask your Representative to sign Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici's (D-OR) letter requesting House Appropriations Labor/HHS/Education Subcommittee leaders to double FY 2022 funding for Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA), which is in line with n4a's own asks. Showcasing bipartisan support for older adults to age independently at home, Congresswoman Bonamici is joined by Representatives Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Ted Deutch (D-FL) and John Katko (R-NY) in rallying their colleagues to patron this effort.

Similarly, the leadership of the House Democratic Caucus Task Force on Aging and Families has circulated a letter supporting critical funding for two programs that serve older constituents throughout the country: the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the OAA's Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

Emergency funds have provided immediate relief to the Aging Network as it has served growing numbers of older adults in need during the pandemic—but it's now time to address the critical funding necessary to sustain these much-needed services for the long term. Your advocacy is vital to the FY 2022 annual appropriations process. These letters are just two of the thousands being sent to Appropriations Committee leaders asking for particular funding levels for thousands of federal discretionary programs. Flood gates are open, needs are high and requests are coming in from across the country. **That's why we need you to contact your Representative NOW and drive signatures to these critical Dear Colleague letters!**

The OAA Title III letter specifically asks for significantly increased funding for **OAA Title III B Supportive Services, Title III C Nutrition, Title III D Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Prevention Programs and Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program**. The necessary investments recommended in this letter will ensure your agency can continue to

provide older adults and their caregivers critical access to services past the pandemic while accommodating the demographic growth of an aging America.

The SHIP-SCSEP letter targets support for two critical programs that once faced elimination several years ago. Underfunded but continuously growing in need, SHIP and SCSEP programs provide support for older adults seeking to navigate the Medicare enrollment process and account for the only federal job training for low-income individuals age 55 and older, respectively.

- Read the bipartisan [Bonamici-Stefanik OAA Title III sign-on letter](#).
- Read the House Democratic Caucus–led [sign-on letter for SHIP and SCSEP](#).

SHIP-SCSEP DEADLINE: FRIDAY, April 16

OAA TITLE III LETTER DEADLINE: THURSDAY, April 22

→ **Call your Representatives and ask them to sign on to the letter circulated by Reps. Bonamici, Stefanik, Deutch and Katko on OAA funding, as well as the SHIP-SCSEP letter.** Even if you know enough about your Member’s voting history to understand your request is not an easy one, please do this outreach anyway. It’s vital that all Representatives understand how critical OAA funding is to older adults and caregivers!

STEP 1: Call the DC office and ask for the staff member who handles Older Americans Act or appropriations issues. You can reach them through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202.224.3121 or find the number on your Member’s website.

STEP 2: Tell them about the bipartisan Bonamici-Stefanik OAA and SHIP-SCSEP Dear Colleague letters. Offer to email them a [link to the Bonamici-Stefanik letter](#) as well as a link to the [SHIP-SCSEP letter](#) if they have not already seen them.

STEP 3: Let them know exactly why your Member should sign on to the OAA and TFAF letters. Give local statistics that demonstrate the need for increased funding.

***The deadline for SHIP-SCSEP signatures is Friday, April 16.
The deadline for OAA Title III signatures is Thursday, April 22.***

→ **Ask other advocates to do the same!** Urge colleagues, advisory board members, volunteers and clients to make calls to their Representatives, as well. We have a *very* short window of opportunity, so we need you and your colleagues to act fast on this particular request!

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If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert* or n4a’s policy positions, please contact Monica Billger at mbillger@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.