



Advocacy**ALERT**

FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

Urge Members of Congress to Support Funding for Aging Programs After Budget Deal, Lawmakers Pivot to Finalizing Appropriations

February 12, 2018

On the heels of a second—albeit brief—lapse in federal funding, the Senate and House reached a sweeping bipartisan agreement that would, among other things, increase overall discretionary budget caps for FY 2018 and FY 2019.

Additionally, the deal also continues funding at current (FY 2017) levels until March 23, giving appropriators six more weeks to finalize all twelve annual spending bills for the rest of FY 2018 and then roll those together into one omnibus bill. Passage of the two-year budget deal that lifts the stringent budget caps established by the 2011 Budget Control Act—giving appropriators more money to divvy up among programs—means that it is more important than ever that advocates connect with their lawmakers to promote funding priorities for OAA and other federal aging programs.

Even if you've already written to your Members of Congress about these issues, please re-engage your Members of Congress now, and consider a fresh round of grassroots advocacy in your community while this topic is top of mind for many. Even though we saw a boost in overall discretionary budget caps, much of that boost has already been allocated, and we have a limited window to ensure that lawmakers understand funding priorities for aging programs. If we don't advocate for an OAA III B Supportive Services boost or against the elimination of the SHIP funding, who will?

Here's what we're asking Congress to do:

- 1)** In a very challenging budget year, n4a secured a major advocacy win when Republican lawmakers in the House passed a \$14.2 million increase for Older Americans Act Title III B Supportive Services, but we still need to ensure that increase is reflected in a final bill.
- 2)** Aging advocates must also ensure that the House-passed elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and cuts to the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) and Elder Justice programs are not reflected in a final bill. Instead, we are asking Congress to, at a minimum, fund SHIP, SCSEP and Elder Justice programs at the *Senate* proposed levels, which would spare these programs from any cuts over FY 2017.

How do we do that? n4a [sent a letter](#) to appropriations leaders in the House and Senate detailing our priorities for a final FY 2018 funding bill, and we will continue to press the

key appropriations offices. However, lawmakers are much more inclined to listen to their constituents, especially those passionate about a program that helps their community! Use our advocacy tools and resources to engage your grassroots and your Members of Congress on these important issues. *We need all 622 AAAs, 250+ Title VI Native American programs and all your local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding!*

Take Action Now:

Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services. We've made it easy by creating this [template letter](#) that you can use to detail our current appropriations requests. Remember to fill in details about how these programs benefit seniors and caregivers in your community. We have additional resources to assist your advocacy efforts on our [FY 2018 Appropriations Campaign page](#).

We also hope you will engage your grassroots networks and stakeholders as you advocate for these programs with your Members of Congress. [Use n4a's template grassroots alert](#) to help frame your message, and add any other information that you think will help your appeal resonate locally.

STEP 1: Fax or, if you know staff members, email letters to your Senators and Representatives. It would be ideal for you to put it on your agency's letterhead. If that's not possible, send it from your Advisory Board or even yourself as a private citizen. Or do all three!

Send the letter via fax and email to their DC and district offices. Find that contact information on your Members' websites: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

STEP 2: Engage your grassroots in advocating for OAA, SHIP and Elder Justice programs. Use our updated [template grassroots alert](#) to urge your vendors/providers, advisory board members and other important stakeholders to send their own letters to Congress. Please do all you can to amplify the message and engage others who understand the value of OAA in their community. Ask them to call and email your Members of Congress, and include specific examples about what OAA funding means to them!

STEP 3: Make your support for funding for OAA, SHIP and Elder Justice programs public.

- Use social media to amplify your message. Members of Congress pay attention to respectful tweets from constituents!
- Attend any public events/town halls your Senators and Representatives are hosting.
- Turn your letter to your Member into a letter to the editor or op-ed and submit it to your local newspaper.
- Find out who of your agency's supporters knows the Member or will be seeing the Member and ask them to put in a good word for OAA funding and what it does in your community.

STEP 4: Invite your lawmakers to visit. House and Senate lawmakers will be back in their states and districts during the week of February 19, so get on their local calendars NOW and engage them in your upcoming events! Even if you don't have an appropriate public event, individual site visits are also a

great opportunity to educate your elected officials about key programs your agency operates and the critical services you provide to their constituents. All you have to do is ask! (Tip: put the request in writing. Call, email or fax the DC office to ensure your request gets to the Scheduler.)

Stay tuned for more updates from n4a on the progress of the FY 2018 appropriations process, and this week's release of the President's FY 2019 budget.

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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.