



## Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

# Lawmakers Negotiating Final Funding Bills Now Reach Out to Your Members on OAA, SHIP, Elder Justice Priorities

October 12, 2017

Both the House and the Senate have considered their FY 2018 funding proposals for the Older Americans Act and other aging programs. While federal funding is currently flowing to programs through a continuing resolution (CR), lawmakers have until December 8 to either reach a long-term funding agreement or pass another short-term funding bill.

That means aging advocates have less than two months to respond to funding proposed in the two House and Senate bills and to ensure that the highest possible funding levels prevail for OAA and other critical aging programs.

**We need your help!** In a very challenging budget year, n4a secured a major advocacy win when 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. 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 recently [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 have meetings with key appropriations offices. However, effective grassroots advocacy is essential to ensure that lawmakers preserve increases and reject cuts to critical OAA and other aging programs in a final FY 2018 funding bill. Therefore, we've developed new advocacy tools and resources that we hope will help you engage your grassroots and your Members of Congress on these important issues. **We need all 622 AAAs, 256 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 in advocating 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.** This isn't the time for quick calls or generic emails—send a real letter requesting their support. If you can put it on your agency's letterhead that's ideal. If not, send it from your Advisory Board or even yourself as a private citizen. Or do all three! Use [n4a's template letter to Congress](#) to get started!

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

**STEP 2: Engage your grassroots in advocating for OAA, SHIP and Elder Justice programs.** Use our [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.**

- Attend any public events/town halls your Senators and Reps. are hosting during Congressional recess, November 9-13 and 17-27, and raise OAA funding during the Q&A!
- 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 in November, 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! You can find all of these tools and resources (and more!) on n4a's [FY 2018 Appropriations Campaign page](#).**

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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](mailto:acampbell@n4a.org) and Amy Gotwals at [agotwals@n4a.org](mailto:agotwals@n4a.org).