

October 25, 2019 Advocacy Alert



OAA Reauthorization Headed to House Floor Tell Your Representatives to Support Older Adults and Caregivers!

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n4a has breaking news from Capitol Hill! According to leaders on the House Education and Labor Committee, the full House is expected to consider the Committee's bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act, the Dignity in Aging Act (H.R. 4334), next week—as early as the afternoon of Monday, October 28!

n4a **endorses** the Dignity in Aging Act as do dozens of other national aging **advocacy organizations**. We are urging swift passage in the House on Monday and *we need your help to make this happen*. Time to act is short, but we hope you will take one or more of the following steps to **encourage your Representatives to support critical OAA programs!**

Take Action

- **Contact your Representatives to let them know why it is important to support the Dignity in Aging Act!**
 - **CALL:** The Capitol Switchboard (202.224.3121) can connect you to your lawmakers' DC offices. Let them know why reauthorizing the OAA is important to the older adults and caregivers in their districts. Include a short data point or story about the value of local OAA services and the needs in your community.
 - **EMAIL:** Express your support for H.R. 4334 in an email via your Representative's website. Find their websites at www.house.gov/representatives.
- **Engage your grassroots network!** This is a simple ask to make of your local networks and advocates. Alert them via email, social media or other advocacy channels, as we hope to generate a broad show of support for OAA reauthorization. The more calls or emails on OAA your Member receives, the more they will pay it attention now and in the future.
- **Use n4a's OAA Advocacy Toolkit to Assist Your Efforts.** Our **toolkit** has everything you need to learn more and take action, including n4a's **endorsement letter** of the Dignity in Aging Act, H.R. 4334, social media **messages** and **images**, and a **fact sheet** about the Act.

More About the Dignity in Aging Act

The Dignity in Aging Act, H.R. 4334, was introduced in September and **sailed through the committee approval process** with unanimous support from House Education and Labor Committee members. Importantly, H.R. 4334 is a five-year reauthorization of the OAA and includes critical increases in funding authorization levels. The measure also contains several other n4a-supported priorities including:

- Clarifying language to make it clear that AAAs can, outside of the OAA, engage in private pay, integrated care and other arrangements to expand services.
- Adding additional funding to support Title VI programs, specifically for the provision of demonstration funds for supportive services and capacity-building training.
- Removing the Title III E funding cap on grandfamilies and older relative caregivers.
- Creating a new research and demonstration authority at the Administration on Aging with a \$20 million authorization.
- Recognizing the negative effects of social isolation and loneliness and reinforces the Aging Network's role in preventing isolation and promoting engagement among older adults.

What's *not* in the bill is also important, as n4a worked successfully to prevent any unfunded mandates and threats to local control and flexibility.

The bill that the full House will consider next week also includes several modest provisions that were originally introduced in the Senate's draft reauthorization proposal. Furthermore, the Dignity in Aging Act includes a Senate-sponsored funding formula compromise. The federal OAA funding formula and harm-reduction provision within the formula stalled Senate action on OAA reauthorization this summer, but recently Senators reached an agreement and sent their compromise language to the House to include in H.R. 4334. Members recently released the final **bill text** and **summary** of the Dignity in Aging Act, which will be on the House floor on Monday.

Next Steps

Across Capitol Hill, the Senate has resolved its months-long funding formula negotiations and resumed bipartisan, bicameral reauthorization discussions. While we still expect that each chamber will consider its own reauthorization proposal, reports of proactive negotiations across the rotunda are great news and bode well for a possible compromise bill arriving fairly soon.

While we are optimistic about the prospects for OAA reauthorization at this point, there is still a lot of advocacy work to do before we reach the finish line! Stay tuned to n4a and continue to **educate** your Senators and Representatives about the value of OAA programs and services to your community. Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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.