Join the Conversation on Older Americans Act
Reauthorization in the House
Ask Your Reps to Co-Sponsor H.R. 3850

February 21, 2014

While there has been a lot of work done on OAA reauthorization in the Senate committee of jurisdiction since the previous authorization period expired in 2011, the counterpart House committee is just getting started on their process. The House Education and Workforce Subcommittee with jurisdiction over OAA held a hearing last week; AAA director Lynn Kellogg from Michigan testified. (Missed it? View the webcast.) We hope that Education and Workforce Committee members will work together in a bipartisan manner to develop a reauthorization bill this year and n4a staff is already working closely with key majority and minority leaders to this end. (For a full reauthorization update, watch our most-recent OAA webinar.) If your Member is on this key committee, we will need your grassroots advocacy and consultation as the process continues.

If your Representative isn’t on that key committee, don’t feel left out! Here’s an easy advocacy ask you can make right now, which will allow your Representatives to show their support for OAA and for moving the reauthorization process forward, without getting into policy specifics: Ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 3850 as a show of support for OAA!

About H.R. 3850
In January, a “straight” OAA reauthorization bill (H.R. 3850) was introduced by Representatives Chris Gibson (R-NY), Tom Reed (R-NY) and Betty McCollum (D-MN), as a bipartisan way for lawmakers not on the authorizing committee to “get the conversation started.” The bill is not intended to take the place of a presumably more substantive bill that will be developed by the House Education and Workforce Committee. Instead, it’s a “legislative salute,” if you will, to the importance of the Act, as well as to the historical bipartisan support it has always enjoyed.

n4a worked with these three Members on H.R. 3850, but it was the advocacy work of AAAs in New York State that put this in bill in motion last fall. n4a has not formally endorsed the bill because, again, it is not a true policy bill, but we are supportive of it as an opportunity to build on these three Members’ enthusiasm for the Act to spread the word on reauthorization.

To that end, n4a is working nearly daily with key Congressional offices on OAA legislation and will continue to keep our members updated as this process advances. But your role as community supporters of OAA is just as critical! We believe this is an easy ask to make of your legislators and an extension of the educational work our network has been doing for years on the value of the OAA.
**Take Action**

**STEP 1:** Have your agency (or advisory council as necessary) reach out to all the **Representatives** (not on the Education and Workforce Committee) serving constituents in your planning and service area. **Key Message:** “Please consider co-sponsoring H.R. 3850 to show your support for a bipartisan reauthorization of the Older Americans Act this year.”

**CALL:** Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) can connect you to your Representative’s DC office.

**EMAIL:** Go to each Member’s website and submit your comments there. To find their websites, use these online tools:

**Sample talking points:**
- The Older Americans Act (OAA) funds programs—such as in-home supportive services, congregate and home-delivered meals, transportation, employment services and legal assistance—that help older adults remain in the much-preferred setting of their homes and communities.
- For more than 40 years, AAAs and Title VI Native American aging programs, thanks to a base of federal funding through the OAA, have been the focal point in local communities where older adults and families receive vital information and get connected to available services.
- For many older adults, the OAA’s home and community-based services can help prevent unnecessary hospital stays and readmissions and delay or avoid costly institutional placements, both of which save Medicare and Medicaid costs to taxpayers.
- The Act came up for reauthorization in 2011, but is only just starting to be talked about in the House.
- We urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 3850, a bipartisan straight reauthorization bill intended to get the OAA conversation going in the House!
- The bill is not a policy prescription but is simply a way to show support for these cost-effective, successful community-based aging services that are helping seniors and caregivers every day in your district.

More on engaging your Members can be found in [n4a’s OAA Toolkit](http://www/n4a.org/advocacy) and other resources at [www/n4a.org/advocacy](http://www/n4a.org/advocacy).

**STEP 2:** Share this *Advocacy Alert* with other local advocates for Older Americans Act programs and services and urge them to take action as well. Grassroots pressure on Members of Congress works, especially when what you are asking is 1) important to older adults in their constituency and 2) not hard to do. Ask the following folks to reach out:
- Your advisory board/committee members
- The provider organizations you work with
- The older adults and caregivers you work with
- Other aging advocates in your community

If you have questions about this *Advocacy Alert,* please contact n4a’s Senior Director, Public Policy and Advocacy Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.