



Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

You Still Have Time to Push for OAA Funding Increases and Stop SHIP, SCSEP Cuts *Sanders Letter Extended Until Friday*

May 16, 2017

UPDATE: Senator Sanders (I-VT) has extended his [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of **Older Americans Act** (OAA) funding an additional three days, so we have until this Friday, May 19 to drive signatures!

The 23 Senators who have signed so far are: Bennet, Whitehouse, Murphy, Warren, Schatz, Manchin, Brown, Markey, Cardin, Blumenthal, Nelson, Booker, Stabenow, Franken, Klobuchar, King, Peters, Baldwin, Kaine, Casey, Harris, Gillibrand and Van Hollen. (If one or both of your Senators has signed on, please be sure to send thank-you emails, tweets or calls!)

Friday is also the deadline for signatures on the Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) letter protesting proposed cuts to the **State Health Insurance Assistance Program** (SHIP). We have until Thursday, May 25 to secure signatures on Sen. Murphy's letter about OAA Title V, the **Senior Community Service Employment Program** (SCSEP).

Read on for an updated version of our May 8 *Advocacy Alert*, which has all you need to take action and then spread the word in your community, so that everyone who values these critical programs has the chance to weigh in with their Senators!

Background

Now that funding for the remainder of FY 2017 has been finalized, House and Senate appropriators will pivot to deciding FY 2018 funding allocations for federal programs. As part of this effort, there are several Dear Colleague letters circulating in the Senate requesting additional funding for Older Americans Act and calling on Senators to reject recent cuts to critical aging programs. Given the incredibly challenging fiscal environment that all federal non-defense discretionary programs, including OAA and other aging programs, will face in FY 2018, it is more important than ever that these letters reflect strong support among Senate colleagues.

Sen. Sanders Leads Letter Calling for Overall OAA Increases

For the sixth year in a row, Senator Sanders (I-VT) is asking for his colleagues to sign-on to a letter requesting Senate Appropriations Labor/HHS/Education Subcommittee leaders

to increase funding support to Older Americans Act (OAA) programs by at least 12 percent (\$235 million) in FY 2018. Senator Sanders, who is also the Ranking Member of the HELP Subcommittee with jurisdiction over OAA reauthorization, notes that “a 12 percent increase, though still insufficient, would be an important step toward meeting existing demand” for OAA programs and services. The letter serves as a reminder that OAA programs require increased resources to maintain current programs due to population growth and cost inflation—as well as restore the cuts made by sequestration and federal budget reductions in the past few years.

Previous years’ letters have received a strong showing of support among Senate Democrats, so we hope to meet or exceed the 31 signatures obtained in 2016. [This list](#) is of Senators who signed last year but have yet to get on board this year, so make sure to reach out if your Senator is among them!

If your Senator(s) has already signed on to the Sanders letter, it is important to thank him or her for supporting this effort. Call, email or even tweet your thank-yous!

- [Read the Sanders OAA sign-on letter.](#)

SHIP and SCSEP Letters Reject Recent Cuts

Additionally, in [light of recent cuts](#) to both the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) is leading the effort on two letters asking appropriators to reject additional cuts and to restore previous funding to both of these programs. Both of these letters address specific cuts that Congress has already made to these programs, so it is important to demonstrate broad support for reversing these cuts and rejecting any future funding threats to these programs.

- [Read the SCSEP sign-on letter](#)
- [Read the SHIP sign-on letter](#)

Action Requested:

→ **PRIORITY: Senator Sanders Letter:** If your Senators have not already signed on to the Sanders letter ([especially if they signed on last year](#)), contact them ask them to sign on to the letter circulated by Senator Sanders on OAA funding. Even if you know enough about your Senator’s voting history to understand your request is not an easy one, please do this outreach anyway. It’s vital that all Senators 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.
- **STEP 2:** Tell them about the Sanders OAA letter and offer to email them a link to the letter if they have not already seen it.
- **STEP 3:** Let them know exactly why you want the Senator to sign on to the Sanders letter. Give local statistics that demonstrate the need for an increase in OAA funding. If they ask for a staff contact for Senator Sanders, tell them to contact Michaela Yarnell, telephone at 202.224.5480.

The new deadline for signatures is COB Friday, May 19.

→ **Also Ask Senators to Sign on to SHIP, SCSEP Letters:** If your Senators have either already signed on to the Senator Sanders letter or are willing to, please also ask that they consider signing on to the letters led by Senator Murphy supporting SHIP and SCSEP.

- **Make sure to remind them why these programs are important** to their constituents, including highlighting any statistics and examples that support the important work done by SHIPs and SCSEP.
- **The deadline for signatures to the SHIP letter is COB Friday, May 19,** and the contact in Senator Murphy's office is Caitlin Peruccio at 202-228-9619.
- **The deadline for signatures to the SCSEP letter is COB Thursday, May 25,** and the contact in Senator Murphy's office is Mark Ritacco at 202-224-4041.

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

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.