



Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

Help Push for OAA Funding Increases: Call Your Senators!

***Ask Them to Sign on to Letters Pushing for Funding Increases
and Rejecting Cuts***

May 8, 2017

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 colleague 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.

Already, 12 Senate Democrats have signed on to the letter, and offices currently have until **COB Tuesday, May 16** to sign on. Current signatures include Senators Bennet (CO), Whitehouse (RI), Murphy (CT), Warren (MA), Schatz (HI), Manchin (WV), Brown (OH), Markey (MA), Cardin (DE), Blumenthal (CT), Nelson (FL), and Booker (NJ). **If your Senator(s) has already signed on to the Sanders letter, it is important to thank him or her for supporting this effort.** However, previous year’s letters have received a strong showing of support among Senate Democrats, so we hope to meet or exceed the nearly 40 signatures obtained in 2016. *Note: we have compiled this [list of Senators still serving in the Senate who signed on last year, but not yet this year.](#)*

- [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:

→ **PRIORTIY: 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 deadline for signatures is COB Tuesday, May 16.

→ **Also Ask Senators to Sign on to SHIP/SCSEP Letter:** 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 that SHIP and SCSEP do.
- **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.