March 16, 2015

Help Push for OAA Funding Increases: Call Your Senators this Week!

Ask Them to Sign on to the Sanders Letter Requesting an Investment in Cost-Effective Older Americans Act Programs

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) has again this year circulated a letter to his fellow Senators requesting their signatures in support of a request to Senate Appropriations Labor/HHS/Education Subcommittee leaders to increase funding support to Older Americans Act (OAA) programs by at least 12 percent in FY 2016. The annual appropriations process that determines FY 2016 OAA funding is just beginning. This letter will be one of thousands sent to the Appropriations Committee’s leaders asking for particular funding levels for thousands of federal discretionary programs.

This is Senator Sanders’ fourth time taking the lead in circulating such a letter and he is requesting funding increases of at least 12 percent (over FY 2015) for all OAA programs and services. Senator Sanders, who is also the Ranking Minority Member of the HELP Subcommittee with jurisdiction over OAA reauthorization, goes on to note that “a 12 percent increase, though still insufficient, would be an important step toward meeting existing demand” for OAA programs and services.

- Read the Sanders OAA sign-on letter.

  (Note: If your Senator is on this list, please generate calls of thanks to his/her office!)

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. In fact, n4a’s FY 2016 OAA appropriations request to Congress is built upon that same premise and, very soon, we will launch our annual OAA Appropriations Campaign to help you make the case with your Members of Congress. In the meantime, n4a strongly supports Senator Sanders’ effort.
We need you to take action this week to urge your Senators to sign on to this letter to ensure that it receives the strong support needed for the Subcommittee to take this request seriously.

**Senators’ signatures are due by close of business on Wednesday, March 25** so please do your outreach and any follow-up this week and early next.

**Action Requested:**

→ Contact both of your Senators and 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 Sophie Kasimow, telephone at 202.224.5480.

_The deadline for signatures is COB Wednesday, March 25._

→ **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 (just over a week) so we need you and your colleagues to act fast!

**If you have questions about this Advocacy Alert,** please contact n4a’s policy team: Amy Gotwals and Autumn Campbell, 202.872.0888.