



## **Congress Considering OAA Reauthorization**

### **Use n4a's OAA Advocacy Toolkit to Engage Your Lawmakers and Grassroots Advocates**

**May 31, 2019**

The current Older Americans Act authorization—signed into law in April 2016—expires at the end of September, which means Congress will have to once again reauthorize the law to keep programs up to date. This spring, key lawmakers and congressional staff have been working with national and local advocates, including your n4a policy team, to learn more about aging issues and to consider Older Americans Act reauthorization proposals.

Earlier this month, n4a member Larry Gross from the Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging testified at a [hearing](#) held by the Senate Special Committee on Aging to learn about important issues that should be addressed during the reauthorization process. The following week, n4a Board member Lee Girard, AAA Director from Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans Services in Portland, OR, [testified](#) during a hearing held by the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services, which has legislative jurisdiction over OAA reauthorization. And as our [Legislative Updates](#) for n4a members have explained, n4a staff have been working very closely with key congressional offices as they draft legislative language.

**The recent hearings held in the Senate and House have formally kicked off the legislative process to develop a comprehensive OAA**

**reauthorization proposal. *It will be critical in the coming weeks for lawmakers to learn about the Act and hear from local advocates!***

To assist your outreach and advocacy efforts, n4a has prepared an [OAA Reauthorization Toolkit](#) for advocates. Check out [n4a.org/OAA](http://n4a.org/OAA) where you can find:

- social media [messages and images](#);
- [a one-pager fact sheet about the Act](#);
- n4a's [Recommendations for Reauthorization](#) (and any future official positions that n4a will take on reauthorization as the process continues);
- templates that can be used to write a [letter to the editor to local news outlets](#), [grassroots outreach](#) and your own [advocacy messages to federal legislators](#);
- background on [the Act](#), including a [timeline of milestones](#) in the OAA's history; and
- OAA [talking points and congressional visit tips](#)!

**Now is the perfect time to engage your members of Congress!** One way to keep your issues top of mind for members of Congress and their staff is to ask your grassroots to act, too. ***We need Congress to hear directly from their constituents who benefit from the OAA programs and services that you deliver.***

## **Start Advocating TODAY for OAA!**

Use n4a's advocacy resources at [n4a.org/OAA](http://n4a.org/OAA) to engage your members of Congress and grassroots advocates! You can do any/all of the below to get started!

1. **Send an email or letter to your Representatives and Senators.** Use n4a's [template letter](#) to get started educating your Members of Congress. It is particularly important that lawmakers hear from you if they serve on the Senate HELP and/or Aging Committee(s) or the House Committee on Education and Labor, which all have jurisdiction over OAA in Congress (see our [list](#)). Don't forget to personalize the letter to suit your agency and community!

2. **Engage your Members of Congress on social media.** Use n4a's [social media toolkit and images](#) on Facebook and Twitter to spread the word about the importance of OAA reauthorization.
3. **Share the OAA Facts with lawmakers and your grassroots.** n4a has created a [one-pager](#) on the value of OAA that you can share with a wide audience of local stakeholders to raise awareness about the critical role that OAA plays and what we need to do in this reauthorization.
4. **Ask your grassroots to email/post a short social media note to lawmakers.** Members monitor their email/website traffic for constituent correspondence, and personal messages resonate most. Ask your grassroots advocates to share why OAA is important to them. Modify our [template grassroots alert](#) to get the word out.
5. **Share stories in person.** Encourage your advocacy stakeholders to attend a townhall meeting the next time your Representative or Senator is in the district or state (May 27-31 or July 1-5) to share how important OAA services are to older adults and caregivers in your community. Better yet, invite your members of Congress to come see your agency in action and meet some of their constituents who receive OAA services!
6. **Engage the media.** Your local media outlets can be important partners to raise visibility and awareness of the Act in your community. Get started by using n4a's [template Letter to the Editor](#) to engage local media about the importance of OAA reauthorization.

We need all AAAs, Title VI Native American programs and local allies to raise their voices to build congressional and public awareness about the Older Americans Act and the importance of reauthorizing these bipartisan, trusted programs. **We must ensure that all members of Congress know that OAA enables their older constituents and their caregivers to age with health, well-being, dignity and independence in their districts and states.**

More advocacy resources are available on n4a's [OAA reauthorization campaign page and toolkit](#)! Stay tuned for more updates from n4a, and thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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**If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert*** or n4a's policy positions, please contact Autumn Campbell at [acampbell@n4a.org](mailto:acampbell@n4a.org) and Amy Gotwals at [agotwals@n4a.org](mailto:agotwals@n4a.org).