September 4, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman  
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

As your Committees finalize FY 2020 appropriations for Labor/HHS/Education and Related Agencies following passage of the 2019 Bipartisan Budget Agreement, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), which represents the country’s 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the more than 250 Title VI Native American aging programs, urges you to adopt the House-approved funding increases for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs that help older Americans get the support they need to age successfully at home and in their communities.

More information and background about n4a’s priorities and requests for OAA and other aging program funding in FY 2020 is available in our April letter to Senate and House Leaders of the Labor/HHS/Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees. We appreciate that, since that initial request, Congress approved an overall budget agreement to prevent steep budget cuts from taking effect in FY 2020 and to maintain parity between Defense and Non-Defense Discretionary programs. We also appreciate that the House-passed FY 2020 funding proposal for the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Labor (DOL) (H.R. 2740) included important and long-overdue increases for OAA and other aging programs.

The OAA is the cornerstone of the nation’s non-Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) system, providing older adults with much-needed supports, including in-home care, congregate and home-delivered meals, adult day care, information and referral assistance, case management, transportation, legal services and caregiver support/respite. The demand for these services is growing in every
community as the older population continues to grow, and OAA funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growing population eligible for services. In fact, stagnant or declining federal funding since 2010 has eroded the current capacity of the AAA and Title VI network to address the needs of older adults to the degree that it would require a 23 percent funding increase in FY 2020 for OAA programs to simply restore the service capacity that has been lost since FY 2010.

For these reasons, we strongly support the important steps that the House made in H.R. 2740 toward reversing this erosion. Specifically, as you continue the process of finalizing FY 2020 appropriations, we urge you to adopt the House-passed increases for OAA and other aging programs including the following priorities:

- **OAA Title III B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services** at $422 million;
- **OAA Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program** at $200 million;
- **OAA Title VI Native American Nutrition, Supportive Services and Caregiver Support** at a total of $49.3 million ($37.2 million for Title VI Part A and $12.1 million for Part C); and
- **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)** at $55 million.

Additionally, n4a supports the House-passed increases for **OAA Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Elder Justice Act and Adult Protective Services**, and other vital aging programs. The full list of increases for OAA and other critical aging programs is reflected on n4a’s updated [FY 2020 Appropriations Chart](http://www.n4a.org/policypositions).

n4a’s additional funding recommendations (for OAA Title III D Preventative Health, the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, Chronic Disease Self-Management and Falls Prevention programs, and gap-filling block grants) can be found at [www.n4a.org/policypositions](http://www.n4a.org/policypositions) (pages 5-9 of n4a’s 2019 Policy Priorities).

Again, we thank Congress for achieving a bipartisan budget agreement that rejects stringent and counterintuitive budget caps in FY 2020 and FY 2021. We now urge lawmakers to incorporate the increases for cost-effective, common-sense investments in Older Americans Act and other critical aging programs that were reflected in H.R. 2740 to ensure that these innovative, efficient programs enabling older Americans to live at home and in their communities for as long as possible have funding to address the growing need. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me or n4a’s policy staff at 202.872.0888.

Sincerely,

Sandy Markwood

Chief Executive Officer
cc:
Chairman Roy Blunt, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Ranking Member Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Ranking Member Tom Cole, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees