



February 6, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr., Ranking Member
Special Senate Committee on Aging
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chair
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Alexander, Senator Murray, Senator Collins, Senator Casey, Representative Scott, and Representative Foxx:

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), I write to express NASW's strong support for the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, a bipartisan, bicameral five-year reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). The association commends you for your painstaking, persistent work to develop a bill that reflects not only the priorities of both chambers and parties but also of numerous stakeholders, including NASW.

NASW represents the interests of more than 700,000 social workers, who are the nation's largest provider of mental health services and an essential workforce in serving older adults. NASW is also a recognized leader in advancing social justice. Advocacy both for older adults and for the social workers who serve older adults are key priorities for NASW. Your legislation addresses both.

The OAA funds numerous programs that help older adults maximize dignity, health, and independence. These services include case management, elder abuse prevention, family caregiving supports, nutrition programs, and transportation. Social workers are involved in the provision and administration of many of these programs, which are a cost-effective way of enabling older adults to age in their homes and communities. Thus, a strong OAA contributes to communities in which people of all ages can thrive.

NASW celebrated the unanimous House passage of the Dignity in Aging Act of 2019 (H.R. 4334) this past fall and applauds the recent introduction by Senators Collins and Casey of the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4334. As a member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) workgroup that created [LCAO's 2019 consensus recommendations for OAA reauthorization](#), NASW is especially pleased that the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 increases OAA funding authorizations

over the next five years. These increases will maximize the dignity, health, and independence of older adults, thereby strengthening the entire social fabric. NASW is also pleased to collaborate with you in advocating for swift passage of the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 in both the Senate and House. In addition to continued advocacy with LCAO, NASW has mobilized its 100,000-member Legislative Advocacy Network to urge Congress to pass this critical legislation without delay. Visit <https://buff.ly/2v48z6i> to read the action alert.

Thank you, again, for your leadership in developing and working to pass the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angelo McClain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer

cc:

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, U.S. Senate
Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, U.S. House of Representatives
Chair Michael Enzi and Ranking Member Bernie Sanders, Senate Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security
Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives