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February 7, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol H-307
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair and Chairwoman Murray and Granger, and Ranking Members Collins and DeLauro:

On behalf of Advancing States, I am writing you in support of funding for important programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities in the FY2024 appropriations package. Advancing States is a nonpartisan association of state government agencies that represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities. We work to support visionary state leadership, the advancement of state systems innovation, and the development of national policies that support home and community-based services for older adults and persons with disabilities. Our members administer a wide range of services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities, including overseeing Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services in every state. Together with our members, we work to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering long-term services and supports for people who are older or have a disability and for their caregivers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly illustrated the essential role that OAA programs play in supporting our nations seniors in times of crisis. The Aging Network across all levels – state agencies, area agencies on aging (AAAs), and local providers – has stepped up in myriad ways to meet the massive need and new demand for services. The supplemental funding provided to states via the mechanism of the OAA have been



instrumental in ensuring older Americans are safe, fed, and receiving accurate information during this crisis.

The Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY2023 provided modest increases to aging and disability programs that state agencies welcomed and are grateful for. However, many of the increases are significantly lower than what we are hearing is necessary from our partners across the Aging Network. As states and their partners continue to proceed with “reopening” and what that looks like in their communities, it is essential that funding levels continue to account for the substantial number of new older Americans being served by OAA programs and also reflect the fact that some older adults – due to isolation, deferred medical care, and many other causes – may have greater health challenges and decreased functionality than ever before.

It is for these reasons that we request that you continue support the OAA and related aging and disability services at amounts no less than the funding provided in the FY2023 appropriations bill. Additionally, we wish to highlight three important areas that would benefit from increased investments through the appropriations process. These include continued investment in Adult Protective Services (APS); HCBS Supportive Services authorized by Title III-B of the OAA, and; research and evaluation under the OAA. We are specifically writing to request:

- At least \$88 million to support Adult Protective Services (APS) programs;
- No less than \$500 million for Title III-B of the OAA; and
- At least \$10 million for the OAA Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network.

Adult Protective Services (APS) are social service programs that serve older adults and adults with disabilities in every state in the nation. APS programs investigate cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation – protecting the welfare and safety of older adults and individuals with disabilities. Historically, APS programs have had to rely on a combination of state, local, and various federal funding sources (such as the Social Services Block Grant, or SSBG) cobbled together to try to fund services. There has been no designated, consistent federal investment in protecting vulnerable adults in the same way that Congress has done for decades for child protective services (CPS). In 2021, Congress changed that and provided \$93 million in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act for state and territorial APS programs. Congress followed up by providing additional dollars in the American Rescue Plan.

State agencies were extremely grateful for first-time inclusion of \$15 million for APS formula grants in the FY2023 package. However, \$15 million will not be sufficient to sustain and support the instrumental work that the COVID-19 supplemental dollars have allowed state APS programs to embark on. Additionally, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is considering promulgating, for the first time, Federal regulations on APS.¹ If the federal government is going to formally regulate APS, then the investments must be comparable. Ongoing support will enable APS programs across the country to continue to modernize and adapt programs and services to better serve older adults and adults with disabilities. Therefore, we request Congress provide at least \$88 million for APS in FY2024.

¹ <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202210&RIN=0985-AA18>



OAA Title III-B, Supportive Services, supports flexible delivery of home and community-based services such as home care, personal care, adult day, and home modifications among many other services aimed at helping older people remain independent in their own homes and communities, which is where 88 percent of older Americans want to age.² This Title is unique in the OAA in that unlike other OAA programs that target a specific service, it supports a wide range of services. To enhance this flexible delivery method of supports and services for older adults, we request Congress provide no less than \$500 million for OAA Title III-B, which is in line with prior congressional and Administration proposals.

The 2020 OAA reauthorization increased the research and evaluation capacity and responsibilities at ACL by creating the Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network. Our members were very supportive of this proposal since we believe that the true value and outcomes of the OAA are often challenging to demonstrate with the current research available. Prior to December 2022, the Center had not received any funding.

We were thrilled to see that the FY2023 package provided \$5 million for the research Center. However, the proposal that was passed into law references House Report 117-403 which contains a significantly more restrictive interpretation of the Center's purview than the 2020 OAA reauthorization. The House Report specifically focuses the Center's work on falls prevention programs and, while our members are strongly supportive of falls prevention efforts, we believe that the intent of the Center was much broader, including "research on and assessment of the relation between programs and interventions under this Act and the health outcomes, social determinants of health, quality of life, and independence of individuals served under this Act..."³ We believe that the FY2024 appropriations package should provide total funding of \$10 million for the Center and to include language expanding the scope of the Center to align with the 2020 reauthorization.

We appreciate the significant investments that you have made in the Older Americans Act and APS. We request that you continue to support these important programs for older adults and people with disabilities, with an emphasis on increased funding for adult protective services, supportive services, and research and evaluation. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact Adam Mosey at amosey@advancingstates.org or 202-898-2578.

Sincerely,

Martha Roherty
Executive Director
Advancing States

Cc: Members of the U.S. Senate
Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

² <https://www.healthyagingpoll.org/reports-more/report/older-adults-preparedness-age-place>

³ Section 201, Older Americans Act as amended through P.L. 116-131, enacted March 25, 2020