



## National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs

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The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) is pleased to support H.R. 4334, the bipartisan Dignity in Aging Act of 2019, to reauthorize the programs and services of the Older Americans Act.

“NANASP applauds the House Committee on Education and Labor for formally introducing this first reauthorization bill and for the degree of stakeholder input that was employed to create a successful bill,” said NANASP Executive Director Bob Blancato. “This House bill represents a modest but positive approach to ensure that the important programs and services provided every day to older adults and their families through Older Americans Act funding can continue and grow now and in the future.”

NANASP especially supports the following provisions:

- **A bipartisan, five-year reauthorization.** This is important to ensure continuity within the aging network and its programs and services.
- **Increased authorizations for funding levels.** The bill includes an increase of over 35% over the next five federal fiscal years (FY) for every Older Americans Act program, including an increase of over \$322 million for Older Americans Act nutrition programs by FY 2024—increases that are sorely needed for programs that are stretched thin by growing demand.
- **An increased focus on malnutrition.** The bill includes new provisions for malnutrition screening and adds reduction of malnutrition to the purposes of the nutrition program. Since more than one in two older adults is at risk for malnutrition, which increases their risk of disease and death, it is vital to detect this condition early.
- **Inclusion of culturally considerate and medically tailored meals in nutrition programs’ offerings to the maximum extent practicable.** As the older population becomes more diverse, it is important to take newly diverse preferences into consideration when providing meals. Medically tailored meals have also been shown to reduce disease burden in older adults and are important to consider offering as well.
- **An increased focus on social isolation.** Through the first-time inclusion of social isolation screening, further coordination of services to address this issue, and creation of an advisory council on social isolation, Older Americans Act programs and services can even more effectively address the needs of socially isolated older adults.
- **Strengthened family caregiver provisions.** Caregivers, including older relative caregivers, need support, and this bill would increase the use of caregiver assessments to analyze their needs as well as allow individual states to determine spending needs for older relative caregivers.

NANASP praised Subcommittee Chair Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), the lead sponsor of the bill, as well as the bill’s co-sponsors, including Subcommittee Ranking Member Comer (R-KY) and Representative Elise Stefanik (R-NY). NANASP also commended the Chairman of the full Committee on Education and Labor, Bobby Scott (D-VA), for his leadership.

Blancato said, “We call on the House to complete passage of this bill by September 30 and for the Senate to produce and pass their version as well so these important programs serving millions of older adults are allowed to continue.”