



NCOA Applauds Bipartisan Congressional Support for the Dignity in Aging Act

Reauthorization through 2024 would include important safeguards and innovations proposed by NCOA

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Washington, DC (September 17, 2019) – The [National Council on Aging](#) (NCOA) commends the leadership of the House Committee on Education and Labor for introducing H.R. 4334, the Dignity in Aging Act.

This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Chair Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV), Subcommittee Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), and Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD), reauthorizes the Older Americans Act (OAA) through 2024 and incorporates a number of improvements proposed by NCOA and its aging network partners.

“Aging with dignity is not an aspiration, it’s a human right and we applaud the Democratic and Republican lawmakers who are joining us in defending this principle,” said NCOA President and CEO [James Firman](#). “On behalf of tens of millions of aging adults, their families, and caregivers, NCOA thanks these forward-thinking lawmakers for the Dignity in Aging Act, which not only reauthorizes the Older Americans Act but creates a path for a future where all adults can age well in their communities, with health and economic security.”

Over 11 million older adults and their caregivers benefit from OAA programs administered by the nationwide Aging Services Network, including senior centers, healthy aging programs, nutrition, in-home services, transportation, caregiver support, and elder abuse protections. Many of the individuals served are at risk of hunger, poverty, chronic and fatal health conditions, isolation, and losing their ability to live with health, dignity, and independence.

Reauthorization is a crucial opportunity for Congress to modernize and improve services by supporting efficiencies and innovations, reassessing the Act’s successes and limitations, and addressing the ability to effectively serve older adults in need. The Committee’s bipartisan commitment to the efforts of the Aging Services Network to empower seniors to remain healthy and independent in their own homes and communities is to be applauded.

Several of NCOA's priorities for reauthorization are reflected in H.R. 4334. These provisions include:

- Creating an Innovation Center that can lead a robust aging services research and development authority to evaluate and support scaling of evidence-based interventions and innovations that can improve wellness and quality of life, reduce Medicare or Medicaid costs, and promote independence and healthy aging.
- Strengthening the OAA's focus on healthy aging, particularly regarding falls prevention and chronic disease self-management.
- Enhancing the efforts of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to provide crucial workforce development opportunities to low-income older workers with significant barriers to employment and economic security.
- Protecting the crucial services of the OAA and providing a path for future investments.

The legislation also addresses a number of priorities endorsed by the [Leadership Council of Aging Organizations](#) (LCAO), of which NCOA is a leading member. These include social determinants of health, social isolation, caregiver support, elder justice and legal services, multigenerational collaboration, and services for Native Americans and other underserved populations.

NCOA urges bipartisan support for reporting the bill favourably out of Committee and expedient House passage of this important legislation. NCOA stands ready to continue working to promote a timely, bipartisan, bicameral conclusion to the OAA reauthorization process.

About NCOA

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a trusted national leader working to ensure that every person can age well. Since 1950, our mission has not changed: Improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are struggling. NCOA empowers people with the best solutions to improve their own health and economic security—and we strengthen government programs that we all depend on as we age. Every year, millions of people use our signature programs BenefitsCheckUp®, My Medicare Matters®, and the Aging Mastery Program® to age well. By offering online tools and collaborating with a nationwide network of partners, NCOA is working to improve the lives of 40 million older adults by 2030. Learn more at ncoa.org and [@NCOAging](https://twitter.com/NCOAging).