January 29, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Alexander and Scott and Ranking Members Murray and Foxx:

On behalf of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) and our 1,100 members serving more than 4 million older adults annually, we give you our unqualified support for the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020.

We first commend the bipartisan and bicameral nature of the process that led to this agreement. It is in keeping with the history of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and ensures that it will maintain that important distinction over the next five years.

We also commend your leadership and the leadership of Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Elise Stefanik and Sens. Susan Collins and Bob Casey on behalf of this excellent reauthorization bill.

We wish to note several sections of this bill that we are especially in support of:

- Reauthorization for five years with a 35% increase in authorizations over the life of the bill;
- Reduction of the administrative burden for transferring funds between the congregate and home-delivered meals programs;
- Addition of malnutrition screening as part of nutrition screening and reducing malnutrition to the purpose of OAA nutrition services programs; and
- Completion of a study assessing measurements of the discrepancy between available services and demand in the congregate and home-delivered meals programs.

We also note our support for provisions in the existing law that were retained in this bill, including:

- Retention of voluntary contributions in the nutrition programs;
• Maintenance of separate titles for the congregate and home-delivered meals programs in the Act; and
• Renewal of commitment to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) through authorization increases and retention in the Department of Labor.

Overall, the passage of the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 would give a strong vote of confidence in the value of the programs and services of the OAA. It also would set a positive future path for the Act with its emphasis on combating social isolation and recognition of the ways that OAA programs address the social determinants of health.

We urge that the most expedited process be used by both the House and Senate in achieving final passage of this bill and we pledge to work with you to achieve this.

Sincerely,

Bob Blancato
Executive Director
NANASP

Mary Beals-Luedtka
Board Chair
NANASP