



October 2, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of our organizations that collectively represent the state agencies, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and local senior nutrition providers serving more than 10 million older adults each year through the Older Americans Act (OAA), we offer this statement of strong support for the updated Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act passed by the House on October 1. This legislation includes a number of provisions aligning with key priorities that we called for in our [July](#) and [August](#) letters, especially the emergency funding for OAA services and supports. These vital services, such as home-delivered meals, in-home services, caregiver assistance, and other community-based supportive services, are instrumental in supporting the health, independence and wellbeing of older adults and have been especially critical during the coronavirus pandemic.

Several components of the updated HEROES Act that would provide immediate relief to our network and the older adults they serve include:

- \$1.175 billion in emergency appropriations for activities provided by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), including \$175 million for elder rights activities and adult protective services, as well as \$925 million for the following OAA programs:
 - \$480 million for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services (Title III-C)
 - \$20 million for Native American Nutrition Services (Title VI)
 - \$200 million for Supportive Services (Title III-B)
 - \$44 million for Preventative Services (Title III-D)
 - \$150 million for Caregiver Services (Title III-E)
- \$436 billion in emergency appropriations for targeted state and local assistance;
- Increase of Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) payments by 14 percentage points and payments for home- and community-based services (HCBS) by 10 percentage points through FY 2021;
- Temporary adjustments to allow for utilization of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including a 15% benefits increase through FY 2021;
- Extension of, and modifications to, the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that would provide added flexibility and eligibility for nonprofit organizations to participate in these forgivable loans, including a 30% set aside of PPP funds specifically for nonprofits; and

- Extensions of various flexibilities for the OAA Nutrition Program first established through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for as long as funds are available, including: up to 100% transfer authority allowed between congregate and home-delivered meal programs; adjustments to dietary guidelines for meals; and an expanded definition of “homebound” to include all older adults who are confined to their homes due to COVID-19.

As we have all witnessed the magnitude of this protracted pandemic, and the vastly increased caseload of our members as a result, additional emergency funding is paramount. Since March, we have consistently heard from state and local agencies and senior nutrition providers that ongoing funding is required to continue serving those most directly affected by COVID-19. Both the Families First Coronavirus Response and the CARES Acts provided significant funding that allowed our members to expand services to older adults to meet the soaring need following stay-at-home recommendations and mandates. Unfortunately, as the pandemic continues and older adults must still avoid public places, the supplemental funding provided is rapidly depleting due to the sustained surge in demand. The additional funding provided in the *HEROES Act* will enable continued support to those most vulnerable.

We are grateful for the bipartisan support for older Americans that you provided in the early days of this crisis, and implore you to build on these successes to ensure that the next emergency package reflects our recommendations for continuing the significant funding increases for these vital community aging services and supports that will allow us to serve the millions of older adults who depend on them. As always, we and our members stand ready to assist you however we can, so please reach out if we can provide additional information or resources.

Sincerely,



Martha Roherty, Executive Director
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cc: House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Appropriations
House Committee on Education and Labor
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions