



January 30, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Casey
Ranking Member, Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chair, Committee on Education & Labor
United States House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member, Committee on Education & Labor
United States House of Representatives
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Ranking Member Casey, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx,

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the 3,069 counties we represent thank you for your leadership in negotiating a bipartisan, bicameral reauthorization of the *Older Americans Act* (OAA.) Your bill, the *Supporting Older Americans Act* (SOAA, H.R. 4334), will provide critical resources for counties to expand and strengthen our services to the aging population while maintaining local flexibility, and we urge its quick passage.

As you know, counties are important partners in administering and financing programs under the OAA. These programs help older adults live independently and allow them to remain part of the community. As the population rapidly ages, counties are facing increasing demand and challenges in providing comprehensive systems of care to this population, yet federal funding for the OAA has not increased, creating long waiting lists for services. We commend you for addressing this problem by providing annual funding increases for core OAA services through 2024.

Counties also recognize that as our residents age quickly, so will the complexity of their needs, requiring better planning and targeting of health and human services programs. To address these demands, the federal government can assist states and counties by funding in-depth assessments to determine the real needs of our elderly population and the adequacy of existing services and gaps in delivery. We applaud you for establishing in the SOAA a Research, Demonstration and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network and requiring increased study of the impact of social isolation on older Americans.

Finally, we thank you for recognizing the importance of local control and flexibility in the administration of the OAA by explicitly allowing Area Agencies on Aging to engage in private pay, integrated care and other arrangements to expand services outside the OAA and by lifting the funding cap on Title III E services for elderly caregivers and grandfamilies. These and similar provisions will allow counties and other local entities to better target resources to address the needs of the elderly in our communities.

NACo appreciates your work in producing this bipartisan bill to make substantive improvements to the OAA that will help counties strengthen our systems of care for older residents. We stand ready to work with you to ensure this legislation's swift passage. If you have any questions, please contact NACo Associate Legislative Directors Rachel Merker at rmerker@naco.org or 202.661.8843 or Blaire Bryant at bbryant@naco.org or 202.942.4246.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew D. Chase". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" and last name "Chase" clearly legible.

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties