



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

April 5, 2016

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

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid,

On behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and its member agencies, I commend you for passing the first version of the Older Americans Reauthorization Act (S. 192) earlier this congress. Now with the passage of the amended bill in the House, I write to encourage you to finish these important efforts by taking up and voting to approve the House-passed reauthorization of the Older Americans Reauthorization Act.

The Older Americans Act provides critical programs for our most vulnerable seniors. As the baby boomer generation ages, we have a responsibility to ensure that the critical nutrition programs, community-based health and transportation services and other vital caregiving services are available to support our nation's seniors. The reauthorization of this program is already five years past due and with over 4 million seniors living below the poverty line and 11 million living alone and at risk of isolation, the reauthorization is urgently needed.

CCUSA is a national membership organization representing more than 160 diocesan Catholic Charities agencies. These member agencies operate more than 2,600 service locations across 49 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. Their diverse array of social services reached more than 8.7 million individuals in need last year. These services included providing services to over 1 million seniors nationwide, delivering more than 3 million meals to homebound individuals, and maintaining more than 18,000 units of permanent housing for seniors. The increasing need for senior programs has driven an over 117% increase in senior health services provided by Catholic Charities agencies since 2007. This experience highlights the urgency of reauthorizing this crucial legislation.

I again thank you for your leadership and encourage you to renew the Older Americans Act so that we can protect the dignity and health of all our nation's seniors.

Sincerely,

Sr. Donna Markham, OP, PhD  
President & CEO  
Catholic Charities, USA

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The Most Reverend  
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Bishop of Pittsburgh

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