



September 20, 2021

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Chair
House Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Scott:

On behalf of LeadingAge, thank you for your steadfast leadership in support of investments for older adults and people with disabilities in the House Committee on Education and Labor reconciliation bill.

LeadingAge represents more than 5,000 nonprofit aging services providers, including affordable senior housing providers, nursing homes, home health, hospice, and other mission-minded organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 38 state partners, we use applied research, advocacy, education, and community-building to make America a better place to grow old. Our membership encompasses the continuum of services for people as they age.

There is a dire need to expand aging services system for the 21st Century, and ensuring the estimated 74 million Americans, by 2030, who will be 65 or older can receive care and services. It is time to ensure that our nation and communities are good places to grow old, and there are adequate home and community-based services (HCBS) available to support the care eligible people need.

Tragically, the COVID-19 pandemic shed new, much needed light on the challenges of aging services providers. The health crisis also raised awareness of how much consumers and aging services organizations depend on workers to provide care, and exposed deficiencies in the long term service and supports system. If we do not take steps to address the challenge of repairing and bolstering the infrastructure of aging, generations will be paying for our omission for years to come.

Several pieces of the Committee's reconciliation bill are of particular importance to older adults:

- Investing in the direct care workforce by providing \$1.48 billion to support renewable three-year grants to: recruit, retain, and advance the direct care workforce; implement models and strategies to make the field of direct care more attractive; and improve wages, including through training and registered apprenticeships, career pathways, or mentoring.
- Providing \$5 million to establish a Technical Assistance Center for supporting direct care and caregiving, through the Administration for Community Living. The Technical Assistance Center will develop and disseminate evidence-based strategies for recruitment, education and training, retention, and career advancement of direct care workers and provide recommendations for activities to further support paid and unpaid family caregivers.
- Funding for the aging services network and infrastructure by providing \$1.2 billion for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, including:

- \$75 million for the Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center for the Aging Network;
 - \$655 million to support HCBS services, with a focus on improving the availability of supportive services, including investing in the aging services workforce and an investment in facilities;
 - \$140 million to support nutrition programs for older Americans;
 - \$150 million to support the National Family Caregiver Support Program;
 - \$50 million for services, including nutrition, for Native American older adults;
 - \$50 million for the long-term care ombudsman program;
 - \$75 million for technical assistance centers or national resource centers for culturally appropriate care management and services for older individuals with greatest social need, including racial and ethnic minority individuals and older individuals who are underserved due to sexual orientation or gender identity; and
 - \$5 million for multigenerational civic engagement projects.
- Providing \$100 million to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) over a five-year period through September 30, 2026, authorized under the OAA, to place participants in part-time positions in a variety of community services on-the-job experiences.
 - Reauthorizing the Registered Apprenticeships Program, at \$5 billion funding level, with 50 percent of funds reserved for programs serving high numbers of individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, or nontraditional apprenticeship populations, and for expanding youth apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships.

Older adults and aging services providers are desperate for these investments and are deeply grateful for your leadership to secure them. LeadingAge stands ready to support the funding levels and adjustments in your Committee's bill through enactment, which cannot come soon enough.

Sincerely,



Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chair, House Committee on the Budget