



September 21, 2021

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

The Honorable Katherine Clark  
Assistant Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Caucus Chair  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn  
Majority Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, Assistant Speaker Clark, and Democratic Caucus Chair Jeffries,

Thank you for your leadership to make historic, structural investments for older adults and aging services providers in the Build Back Better reconciliation legislation. As the pieces of the proposal have emerged from individual House committees, we would like to highlight the investments we believe to be particularly impactful to meet the critical and pressing needs facing older adults.

Several pieces of the Committee on Energy and Commerce reconciliation bill are of particular importance to older adults:

- Allocating at least \$190 billion to expand HCBS services for older adults and people with disabilities. This allocation would also strengthen the direct care workforce recruitment and retention opportunities by improving provider payment rates and giving states the resources to ensure the rate increases are passed through to workers' wages;
- Making permanent the Money Follows the Person and the spousal impoverishment programs;
- Closing the Medicaid coverage gap, to allow 4 million uninsured Americans to gain access to coverage;
- Investing \$35 billion to help rebuild public health departments, modernize health care facilities, and expand capacity for training primary health care providers;
- Expanding Medicare to allow additional dental, hearing and vision benefits for seniors; and
- Finally, we recommend that the bill be amended to include the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) provisions from "Section 206, Enhanced Funding to Support Staffing and Quality Care in Nursing Facilities," included in *The Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act of 2021*. The enhanced funding would provide states with a temporary

enhanced federal Medicaid match to allow nursing homes to improve wages and benefits for six years, to expand and improve nursing facility staffing. The funds must also be used to support and improve resident care, including by expanding person-centered models of care. States may receive a three-percentage point increase to their federal match for four years, two-point increase for one year, and a one-point increase in the final year.

Several pieces of the Committee on Financial Services reconciliation bill, which LeadingAge estimates will help 894,984 low income older adults with affordable housing, are of particular importance to older adults:

- \$2.4 billion for new Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly. These funds will build 35,564 homes with Service Coordinators, ensuring more very low income older adults will have the affordable housing and access to services they need. The new technical assistance center will help states better align housing and services to greatly expand the ability of low income older adults to age in community;
- \$15 billion for new Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts;
- \$71.43 billion for new homes under the HOME and Housing Trust Fund programs;
- \$48.5 billion for new Housing Choice Vouchers, including a greater share that can be project-based when used for service-connected affordable senior housing; and
- Additional funding to preserve, improve, rehabilitate existing homes.

Several pieces of the Committee on Ways and Means reconciliation bill are of particular importance to older adults:

- Expanding affordable housing with the bill's 60% increase to state allocations of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and by reducing the 50% tax-exempt bond financing requirement to 25% to enable Housing Credit deals to unlock more 4% credits;
- Fixing future and addressing current Right of First Refusal issues in the LIHTC program, a problem that put older adults' affordable homes at risk, robbed rightful nonprofit owners of affordable senior housing of their buildings and cost millions in unnecessary litigation;
- Providing a 50% basis boost for LIHTC buildings that designate at least 20% of their occupied units for extremely low-income tenants while ensuring affordable rents;
- Addressing the staff shortages in long-term facilities by allocating \$392 million for Nursing Home Worker Training Grants, to be used for long-term care workforce recruitment, wage subsidies, paid leave and childcare;
- Allocating \$425 million to expand the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) Program, which will also allow skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and nonprofit organizations to train low-income recipients for in demand allied health positions;
- Improving the accuracy and reliability of the data collected in SNFs by requiring a study on the appropriateness of minimum staff to resident ratios of registered nurses and recommendations for minimum staffing ratios for certified nursing assistants and nurses;

- Reauthorizing the elder justice programs and increase support for state and local Adult Protective Services offices and long-term care ombudsman programs to better prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Expanding Medicare coverage to include dental, vision and hearing benefits;
- Expanding workplace supports by providing up to 12 weeks of universal paid family and medical leave for all U.S. workers; and
- Invest in childcare access and equity by allocating funding for the construction and remodeling of childcare facilities and raising wages of childcare workers; and
- Providing a non-refundable credit, up to \$4,000, for caregiver expenses for individuals with long-term care needs.

Several pieces of the Committee on Education and Labor 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;
- Providing \$100 million to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), to place participants in part-time positions in a variety of community services on-the-job experiences; and
- 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.

LeadingAge represents more than 5,000 nonprofit aging services providers, including affordable senior housing providers 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.

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 reflected in the committees' bill through enactment, which cannot come soon enough.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan  
President and CEO