OneAway Campaign Urges Congress to Protect and Strengthen the Older Americans Act for Seniors in Need

New Video Spotlights Seniors who Depend on Services; Calls on Congress to Sign Pledge to Protect Older Adults

Washington, D.C. (September 14, 2011) – Over the past six months, NCOA's One Away campaign has collected over 5,000 real stories of older adults who—after a lifetime of hard work—are now struggling every day just to pay for food, medicine, and a place to live. The campaign is now bringing these stories to Congress through the release of videos, and calling on legislators to help seniors in need by pledging to Protect and Strengthen the Older Americans Act (OAA).

Specifically, the campaign is asking members of Congress to pledge to “protect and strengthen the Older Americans Act (OAA), so it can continue to help millions of older Americans remain healthy, economically secure, and independent in their communities.”

Members of Congress can learn more about the Pledge, as well as the work of Local Advocacy Partners to spotlight elder economic insecurity across the country, at a special Hill reception on September 15 from 11 a.m. -12 p.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building (SD 430). Advocates and media are welcome to attend.

More than 13 million older adults live in or on the edge of poverty, with less than $22,000 each year. These seniors live one bad break, one accident, or one layoff away from economic disaster.

“The OAA is the primary legislative vehicle that helps millions of older adults seniors every day by providing critical meals, health promotion, caregiver support, job training and placement, access to benefits, and funding for senior centers,” said Jim Firman, president and CEO of NCOA. “Without these services, seniors would lose even the most basic help at a time when they can least afford it given today’s economy.”

At the Hill reception, the One Away campaign will premiere its third set of national videos featuring the stories of three seniors who are struggling to make ends meet but have found valuable support
through OAA programs like Meals on Wheels and the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The One Away campaign has used video, a website, and postcards to collect over 5,000 stories from older adults, caregivers, and advocates nationwide.

The new videos, as well as the prior two national videos, are available at www.OneAway.org, and visitors are invited to share their own stories of struggle, send an email to Congress asking their members to take the pledge, and discuss solutions to help seniors in need.

NCOA also will release a new policy white paper, entitled “Strengthening the Voice of Older Adults and the Aging Network: A Vision for the Reauthorized Older Americans Act,” which explains why it’s so critical to empower vulnerable older adults to advocate for themselves, better enable the aging network to improve the lives of these seniors, and detail how OAA reauthorization can serve as a vehicle for strengthening these areas of the law. The paper can be found at www.ncoa.org/OAA.

“With this year’s reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, Congress has a perfect opportunity to strengthen and revise the Act to make it more relevant for millions of struggling older adults who are struggling financially” said Sandra Nathan, senior vice president for economic security at NCOA. “By protecting and strengthening the OAA, Congress can tell older adults and their families that their most critical needs will not be forgotten.”

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**About One Away**

One Away is an innovative, national video advocacy campaign that gives voice to vulnerable older adults who are struggling to make ends meet in today’s economy. The campaign captures real stories of seniors on video—and calls for legislative and policy changes to make it easier for them to get the services and supports they need to live with independence and dignity. NCOA is working with Local Advocacy Partners around the country to build support for this campaign.  
www.OneAway.org | www.facebook.com/OneAwayCampaign

**About NCOA**

The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA’s mission is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities.  