



January 26, 2012

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

On behalf of the National Council on Aging, I am pleased to share NCOA's endorsement of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2012.

First and foremost, your legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA) recognizes that the Act continues to provide a strong foundation for the Aging Services Network and its partners to empower older adults to retain or improve their health and economic independence so they can remain in their own homes and communities. The most significant reason why the Act has not yet fully realized its true potential has been a lack of investment, which your bill takes ambitious steps to address in four key areas.

Reauthorization of the OAA as the first waves of Baby Boomers turn 65 does offer a prime opportunity to evaluate how the success of the Act can be better leveraged, and how innovation can continue to be fostered to meet the needs of today's seniors. Proposals in your legislation that seize this opportunity include those which define economic security and establish it as a goal of the Act, set the standard for implementing evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention, promote senior center modernization, and strengthen and leverage the community services core of the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP).

We are grateful for your leadership on OAA reauthorization, particularly your ongoing efforts to continue the bipartisan history of this process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to enhance the Act's potential to promote economic security, strengthen the voice of seniors and those who serve them, and expand aging services research and demonstration efforts. Together, these improvements can bend downward the long-term entitlements cost curve, empower seniors to contribute solutions, and promote greater program efficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Firman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James P. Firman, Ed.D.
President & CEO