

Date of Hearing: May 7, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE  
Mariko Yamada, Chair  
SJR 4 (Monning) – As Introduced: February 21, 2013

SENATE VOTE: 32-0

SUBJECT: Reauthorization of the federal Older Americans Act of 1965.

SUMMARY: Memorializes the President of the United States and the United States Congress to enact appropriate legislation reauthorizing the federal Older American's Act of 1965 (OAA) Among others, this resolution makes the following findings that:

- 1) Congress re-authorized the OAA in 2006, effective through 2011.
- 2) Besides an update in 2009, the OAA has not been reauthorized since 2006, and is currently operating under temporary funding resolutions.
- 3) A substantial number of Californians will be at risk if there are significant reductions in state allocations for OAA programs and services.
- 4) Continuing delay in the reauthorization of the act will erode the capacity of the act's various structures to deliver services to meet the needs of Older Californians.
- 5) The reauthorization of the OAA is necessary in order to preserve the aging network's role in home- and community-based services, maintain advocacy and consumer directed focus, and give area agencies on aging increased flexibility in planning and delivering services to vulnerable older Americans.
- 6) The OAA should be funded in the same manner that it has been funded for 48 years.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the federal OAA of 1965, as amended, that provides states money and guidelines to perform community planning for services and supports, research and development projects, and personnel training, in the field of aging.
- 2) Establishes the Older Californians Act (OCA) to represent the policy mandates and directives of the Older Americans Act, and set forth the state's commitment to the older population.

FISCAL EFFECT: None

AUTHORS STATEMENT: It is vital that Congress and the President reauthorize the OAA. Without it, our senior population would not have access to programs such as home-delivered nutrition services, family caregiver support, community service employment, the long-term care ombudsman program, and services to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Reauthorization of the Act is important to ensure that programs and services continue for our senior population.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: The California Senior Legislature, sponsor of SJR 4, indicates that reauthorization of the OAA will help preserve the aging network's role in home- and community-based services, maintain the advocacy and consumer focus of the act, and give area agencies on aging increased flexibility in planning and delivering services to vulnerable older Californians.

The AARP believes that the OAA should be reauthorized as soon as possible. According to the AARP, the OAA provides essential programs, information, services and guidance to a growing older population, and that only minor adjustments are recommended to improve efficiency.

The California Commission on Aging writes in support to stress that California's population of older adults is the largest in the nation. The continuation of critical programs like Meals-on-Wheels, Family Caregiver Support, and other programs are all dependent upon funding provided through the OAA.

COMMENTS: Congress passed the OAA in 1965 as a response to a lack of community and social services for older people. The OAA establishes grants to states for community planning and social services, research and development projects, and personnel training, in the field of aging. The law also established the Administration on Aging to administer the newly created programs and to serve as the federal focal point on matters concerning older persons. Older people may receive services under a range of other federal programs (i.e.: Medicare, Social Security, etc.) The OAA authorizes funding for critical services that keep older adults healthy and independent, and is considered the impetus for the coordination of social and nutrition services to beneficiaries, their caregivers and their communities. It authorizes a wide array of programs through a national network of state agencies on aging, California Department of Aging (CDA), area agencies on aging (AAA), and native populations' agencies. Well known for home delivered meals and the Ombudsman program, the OAA is also responsible for community service employment opportunities for low-income older Californians; training, research, and demonstration activities in the field of aging; as well as the development of a state plan, and a community level "area plan" to support the needs of local and state planners, service providers and policy makers.

The CDA is the designated state agency on aging in California, and partners with 33 AAA to coordinate and deliver OAA programmatic resources. The 33 AAAs cover the entire state and follow county or multi-county boundaries, with a single exception for the City of Los Angeles AAA, which is separated out of the County of Los Angeles AAA. CDA administers funds allocated under the federal OAA, the OCA, and through the Medi-Cal program. AAAs directly manage the array of federal and state-funded services that help elders live as independently as possible in their communities, promote healthy aging, and assist family care givers. CDA also contracts directly with agencies that operate the Multipurpose Senior Services Program through the Medi-Cal home and community-based waiver for the elderly, and certifies Adult Day Health Centers for participation in Medi-Cal program for purposes of the Community-Based Adult Services.

Over the decades, the OAA has been adapted to meet the changing needs of the aged population, the changing role of family supports, and expanding research and technological advances. On September 19th, 2012, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced a comprehensive Older Americans Act reauthorization bill, along with fourteen other Senators as original co-sponsors.

This legislation was not considered by Congress during the 112th Congress, and no further action has been taken in the current 113th Congress to reauthorize this crucial law.

Under sequestration, the OAA will authorize approximately \$126,614,000 of funding for home- and community-based supportive services, home delivered and congregate nutrition programs, preventative health and wellness activities, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, and the Family Caregiver Support Services program in FFY 2013. This represents the 5% sequester cut for non-defense discretionary programs and 5.1% for non-defense mandatory programs at spending levels established in 2006 when the OAA was last re-authorized.

RELATRED LEGISLATION:

S. 2037, S 3562 by US Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), in 2012. These bills would have reauthorized the OAA with improvements that would have included a homecare consumer's bill of rights, the expansion of Aging and Disability Resource Centers, better coordination of dental care to low-income older Americans, a focus upon diversity, and special assistance to veterans. The legislation also includes increased support for family caregivers and would have made gerontologists and geriatricians eligible for the National Health Services Corps.

SJR 10 (Dunn) (State Resolution Chapter 57, 1999) urged the President and Congress to enact legislation reauthorizing the Older Americans Act of 1965.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Senior Legislature (CSL) - **Sponsor**

AARP

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Area 4 Agency on Aging (A4AA)

California Commission on Aging (CCoA)

California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS)

Opposition

None on file.

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