

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

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5 March 2019

[This letter was sent to Senators Baldwin & Johnson and Representative Pocan]

On behalf of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Dane County's Board of Directors, we are excited to work with you as you settle in to the first session of the 116th Congress. The AAA Board is committed to ensuring that 87,274 older adults living in Dane County—your constituents—are supported as they age with dignity, independence, and health in their homes and communities. We are in good company in this mission, as we know there may be only one near-universal opinion among the nation's 48 million adults over age 65: an estimated 90 percent of them want to age "in place." This goal is shared by the baby boomers, of whom 10,000 turn 65 every single day, and it is a commitment that both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have espoused as an important goal.

To help millions of aging Americans meet this goal, AAA of Dane County is part of a nationwide Aging Network—made up of states, 622 local Area Agencies on Aging, and tens of thousands of service providers—that was founded on the principle of giving states and local governments the flexibility to determine, coordinate, and deliver the supports and services that most effectively and efficiently serve older adults and caregivers in their communities.

As a vital local entity serving older adults, veterans, caregivers, and people with disabilities in Wisconsin, we are reaching out today to remind you of the value of the Aging Network and the work that AAA does. We look forward to working with you as pursue bipartisan and non-partisan policy solutions that enable older adults to age with independence in their homes and communities and support their caregivers in those goals. We also hope you will rely our agency when you're looking for input on policies affecting seniors!

For more on demographics and the top aging issues we hope you will pay close attention to, please see two recent policy briefs from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a):

- ***What the 116th Congress Needs to Know About an Aging America***
(https://www.n4a.org/files/n4a_PolicyBrief_WhatThe116thCongressNeedsToKnow_Mar2019_FinalWeb.pdf)
- ***Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act***
([https://www.n4a.org/Files/n4a_PolicyBrief_OAA_Reauth_2019_FinalWeb.pdf?subject=Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act](https://www.n4a.org/Files/n4a_PolicyBrief_OAA_Reauth_2019_FinalWeb.pdf?subject=Recommendations%20for%20the%20Reauthorization%20of%20the%20Older%20Americans%20Act))

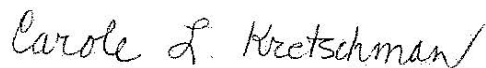
There are two important issues that we urge Congress to prioritize in 2019. On behalf of older adults and caregivers in Dane County, we urge you to champion a bipartisan **reauthorization the Older Americans Act (OAA)**. For more than 50 years, the OAA has enabled older Americans to live at home and in the community with dignity and independence for as long as possible. Today the OAA serves more than 11 million older adults and caregivers every year. The current OAA authorization expires in September and we are eager to work closely with you and your staff to ensure that a 2019 OAA reauthorization bill works for older adults and caregivers in Wisconsin.

We also hope to work with you and your colleagues to work toward a FY 2020 funding strategy that **makes wise federal investments in programs that enable older adults to continue living in their homes and communities as they age and that supports caregivers**. Investments in OAA and other discretionary aging programs have lagged the growing population, need, and cost for these services and supports. Congress can make a bold statement about supporting older adults and caregivers by boosting funding for OAA and other aging programs to meet both the population and cost growth for these services.

Again, we look forward to working with you as you embrace these challenges and urge you to reach out to AAA of Dane County as local experts on issues affecting older adults and caregivers and aging policy.

Please feel free to reach out anytime to Cheryl Batterman, AAA of Dane County Manager, (608) 261-9789, batterman.cheryl@countyofdane.com, on these or any aging issues of importance to you and your constituents.

Sincerely,



Carole Kretschman, Chair

cc: The Honorable Tony Evers, Governor, State of Wisconsin
State Elected Officials
Members, Dane County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive
Ms. Lynn Green, Director, Dane County Department of Human Services