



Dane County Area Agency on Aging

Board of Directors

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3 April 2017

The Honorable Ron Johnson, U.S. Senator
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

The Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Board of Directors has serious concerns regarding possible elimination of the federal program, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), that oversees currently-effective and necessary programs such as Senior Corps: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and the Senior Companion Program (SCP). Despite the many problems that will result from elimination of this agency and these programs, our focus is placed on those having major negative impact on the Dane County community.

1. A primary argument for retaining CNCS may be highlighted through review of numbers. Nationwide, 245,000 Senior Corps older adult volunteers serve 74.6 million hours. That reflects helping 840,000 frail elderly and veterans with independent living services, tutoring and mentoring 267,000 children, as well as assisting families and individuals in need. Americans depend on such assistance. Also, older adults will continue to receive support through these important programs to help them remain active and healthier through their volunteer service. The question that must be answered is: "Will communities nationwide be able to replace the enumerable hours of service provided by volunteers in the CNCS program?"
2. In Dane County, RSVP and FGP are the cornerstone of providing services for the community. It is impossible to calculate the total impact of this loss of service if eliminated. Annually, more than 1,600 RSVP and FGP volunteers give 180,000 hours of their time. They tutor and mentor children in more than 200 classrooms. They provide 8,500 rides and deliver over 84,000 meals for seniors and veterans. Last year, they made 10,000 handmade items (mittens, hats, scarves, etc.) for infants, children, and families. They provided information to more than 700 older adults on crime prevention and public safety through Triad, local programs combining efforts of RSVP, law enforcement and fire fighters, and senior volunteers. Finally, they have helped 70 nonprofit/public agencies extend their services to the far corners of Dane County.

By providing rides and delivering meals, RSVP enables 2,000 seniors and veterans to stay independent and in their apartments or own homes. If an assumption is made that RSVP volunteers help at least 20 (1%) of these seniors and veterans to delay nursing home care for one year (average cost in Wisconsin being \$93,804), the value of this service approaches two million dollars.

Appreciation for just one of the programs funded through the Corporation for National and Community Services is epitomized by comments from two RSVP passengers from Dane County:

"I could not afford taxi service to Madison where my primary doctor and specialists that I see have their offices. If not for RSVP, I would have to move to a facility in Madison."

"I am no longer able to drive my car and I am able to see my doctors with this arrangement. Thank you, thank you!"

On behalf of the more than 82,000 older Dane County adults, the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Board of Directors asks you to be extra cautious when voting for President Trump's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint and to keep in mind the potential for serious consequences to the people of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Clausius".

Bill Clausius, Chair

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