



March 22, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of nearly 38 million members in all 50 States, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories, I am writing to thank you for the provisions in the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill that will be of special importance to the health and income security of older Americans. AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

We are pleased that the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill increases funding for the Social Security Administration, the Administration on Aging, Housing for the Elderly and Housing Choice Vouchers. These increases, while modest, will help improve customer service for Social Security beneficiaries and applicants and protect safe, affordable housing for very low-income seniors. The legislation also protects a number of programs that play a critical role in the lives of millions of older Americans, including the Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program, the Senior Volunteer Corps Program, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Legal Services Corporation, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

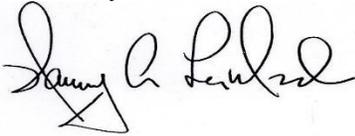
We are also pleased that the bill does not change Medicare Part D donut hole improvements that were recently enacted. Nearly 11 million Medicare beneficiaries fall into the donut hole each year. This is a victory for the millions of older Americans who struggle to afford the drugs they need as prescription drug costs continue to rise. We look forward to working with you on additional policies that can help to lower the cost of prescription drugs further.

However, we are disappointed that Congress was unable to reach a bipartisan agreement to stabilize the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces and help reduce

premium increases. We also remain deeply concerned that recent proposals such as those to expand short-term limited duration plans would take us in the wrong direction. Expanding these skimpy plans -- which do not include important consumer protections -- will result in higher costs and less coverage in the ACA marketplaces, particularly for older Americans and people with pre-existing conditions. AARP's Public Policy Institute (PPI) recently estimated that a 60-year old who buys their own insurance on the individual market could face a premium increase of up to \$4,000 a year. We want to continue working with Congress and the Administration to protect and strengthen coverage for the millions of Americans who purchase individual coverage on the ACA markets, including six million 50- to 64-year olds.

We appreciate the commitment to older Americans demonstrated in the provisions discussed above, and we stand ready to work with you on the issues that remain to be resolved in the coming months. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Joyce A. Rogers, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs at 202-434-3750.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. LeaMond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "L".

Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer