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June 21, 2018

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States House of Representatives
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States House of Representatives
131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Womack and Ranking Member Yarmuth:

On behalf of AARP's 38 million plus members and other Americans who are age 50 and older, I am writing to communicate our views as you prepare to consider a House Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2019. AARP urges the Budget Committee to reject the large mandatory cuts the Committee is considering that would have a devastating impact on programs important to older Americans.

Medicare and Social Security

Our members count on these programs and they believe Social Security and Medicare must be protected and strengthened for today's seniors and future generations. Unfortunately, there have been many proposals to make harmful changes to the Medicare program that undermine the contract made with generations of Americans. Proposals creating a defined contribution premium-support program; restricting access by raising the age of eligibility; or allowing hospitals and providers to arbitrarily charge consumers higher prices than Medicare; all betray the promise made to older Americans who have paid into Medicare their entire working lives. Indeed, these proposals do little to actually lower the cost of health care. Rather, they simply shift costs from Medicare onto individuals – many of whom cannot afford to pay more for their care. We urge you not to include attempts to cut the Medicare program in the upcoming budget proposal. Instead, Medicare proposals should focus on changes to the program that are good for beneficiaries, providers, and taxpayers; such as reducing prescription drugs costs, enhancing payment and delivery reforms, and addressing the widespread fraud, waste, and abuse in the program.

The typical senior, with an annual income of approximately \$26,000 and already spending one out of every six dollars on health care, counts on Social Security for the majority of their income, and on Medicare for access to affordable health coverage. We will continue to oppose changes to current law that cut benefits, increase costs, or reduce the ability of these critical programs to deliver on their benefit promises. We urge you to continue to do so as well.

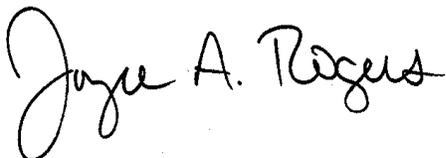
Medicaid, Long-Term Services and Supports and SNAP

Medicaid serves as a critical safety net for millions of people in every state, including over 17 million children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, and low-income elderly who rely on vital Medicaid health and long-term care services. Efforts to reduce or cap Medicaid funding could endanger the health, safety, and care of millions of individuals who depend on the essential services provided through this program. Furthermore, caps could result in overwhelming cost-shifts to state governments unable to shoulder the costs of care without sufficient federal support. As we have consistently detailed in our communications to Congress, we are opposed to capping Medicaid funding and urge you to reject such efforts. Instead, Medicaid proposals should focus on efforts to encourage more individuals to receive services in their homes and communities rather than costly institutional care.

SNAP plays a vital role in feeding millions of hungry Americans, including older Americans. In 2016, 8.7 million (over 40 percent of) SNAP households had at least one adult age 50 or older. Proposals to block grant the program, or expand work requirements, will make SNAP less responsive and accessible in times of need.

We look forward to working with you to protect Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and SNAP. We strongly urge you to enact a budget that will better protect these vital programs that tens of millions of Americans depend upon for their health and financial security. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Cristina Martin Firvida, Director of Federal Financial Security and Consumer Affairs, Government Affairs at (202) 434-3750.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs