December 16, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
G13 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Bob Casey
Ranking Member
Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
628 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senators Collins and Casey:

On behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, AARP is pleased to support the Modernization of the Older Americans Act Amendments, legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). We appreciate your leadership and the bipartisan work of Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Lamar Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray in developing this legislation, and encourage prompt reauthorization of OAA.

The Older Americans Act has a powerful legacy. Since 1965 it has provided older Americans with the support they need to live at home with independence and dignity. In 2017 alone, OAA programs provided services for over 11 million older adults. Those services include home care, congregate and home-delivered meals, case management, family caregiver support, transportation, adult day care, legal services, elder abuse prevention, and job training and employment opportunities for low-income older adults. OAA programs serve the needs of older Americans while deferring or eliminating the need for costly institutionalization.

The Modernization of the Older Americans Act Amendments builds on this legacy. The legislation further strengthens the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) by helping to make sure that more caregivers can get their needs assessed when they turn to the program for support, extends the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, and increases funding levels to support the needs of the growing older population. This legislation, which will promote greater responsiveness to the needs of older Americans and their caregivers, comes at a critical time. From 2019 to 2030 we expect to see the 80+ population grow by 54 percent. This age group is among the most likely to need help living independently in their homes and communities.
Again, thank you for your bipartisan leadership in advancing this important legislation. We urge prompt reauthorization so that our loved ones can continue to turn to these services for their health and economic security as they age. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Nicole Burda at nburda@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

Megan O’Reilly
Vice President, Federal Health & Family
Government Affairs