



REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT: STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

The State Society on Aging (SSA) of New York, is an interdisciplinary membership society committed to improving the quality of life for older New Yorkers and their families and communities through education, research, service, and advocacy. SSA is pleased to issue this statement of support for the version of the Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2014 (H.R. 3850) sponsored by Christopher Gibson, Representative for New York's 19th congressional district. Originally enacted in 1965, the Older Americans Act (OAA) has been the primary vehicle for services and funding in every state that support the dignity and welfare of people age 60 and older. The OAA expired in 2011 and its reauthorization in 2014 is critical legislation because it provides seniors and their family caregivers with vital programs and services to protect, nourish, and sustain American seniors with maximum dignity and independence.

The 'Gibson Bill' reflects many of SSA's 2014 policy priorities. We also are aware of related bills sponsored by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (H.R.4122) and Senator Bernard Sanders (S.1562) and support certain provisions, such as special considerations for LGBT and other vulnerable elders, we strongly urge the passage of a bill this year so that critical OAA programs are allowed to continue. Reauthorization of OAA offers an opportunity to help modernize aging services, better prepare an interdisciplinary workforce with specialized training to meet the health and social care needs and long-term services and supports (LTSS) of New York elders. We especially appreciate the inclusion of provisions for stronger elder justice and legal services, family caregiver support, and elder care workforce development. We also welcome new opportunities for the development and implementation of evidence-based initiatives in health promotion and disease and fall prevention as well as intergenerational shared services, multi-purpose senior centers, and aging and disability resource centers. We support the proposals that strengthen support for family caregivers through grants to states to conduct assessments of family caregiver needs. The provisions addressing the needs of the eldercare workforce are especially welcome, including the testing of models that provide direct care workers with additional training for new roles, the strengthening of Federal agencies' work to improve and develop new models for care coordination, and the direction to the Administration on Aging to work with other federal agencies to identify and address workforce shortages in eldercare.. Finally, it is important that any bill passed in its current form or with new proposed amendments does not disadvantage New York elders and their families and communities.

Sincerely,

President: Mary Beth Morrissey, PhD

Statement of support prepared by the State Society on Aging-New York Social Policy Committee (2014)

Chairs: Tina Maschi, PhD and Jacqueline Berman, PhD

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