

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2013

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Kingston and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

As you consider the FY 2014 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations legislation, we the undersigned are writing to urge you to support the Senate funding level of \$816 million for Meals on Wheels and other Senior Nutrition Programs under the Older Americans Act. This funding level would prevent these vital programs from having to endure another year of sequestration.

The pain of sequestration is being felt each and every day by the thousands of programs and the seniors they serve in our Districts and across the nation. Since sequestration went into effect, Meals on Wheels and congregate programs have been forced to cut the number of meals served, eliminate staff positions, reduce the number of delivery days, increase waiting lists, and in some cases, close their doors altogether. These cuts are directly impacting the health and well-being of our most vulnerable, frail and isolated senior constituents and are preventing programs from even maintaining services, yet alone meeting the demands of an aging population.

For more than 40 years, Senior Nutrition Programs have provided more than just meals. They have produced millions of dollars in savings for Medicaid and Medicare. The nutritious meals, along with the daily social contact provided at senior centers or by Meals on Wheels volunteers or staff, help seniors remain independent and healthier, live in their own homes and communities, and stay out of more costly health care settings. This in turn significantly reduces Medicare and Medicaid expenditures. In fact, a senior can be served Meals on Wheels *for an entire year* for about the equivalent cost for that same senior to be in the hospital *for one day*.

A recent report found that the impact of sequestration on Meals on Wheels in FY 2013 alone could cost taxpayers \$479 million in additional Medicaid spending. The time has come to undo the brutal impact of sequestration on the daily lives of our most vulnerable seniors. Providing funding at or above the Senate's FY 2014 levels will not only undo some of the harm of sequestration, it will also provide a strong return on investment for our nation. Meals on Wheels

and congregate nutrition programs are proven, effective and are exactly the type of investment taxpayers are looking for us to make with their hard-earned dollars.

We urge you to support strong funding for Meals on Wheels and Senior Nutrition Programs in the FY2014 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Dave Lubick

Paul D. Tonko

Ann Ann

Linda J. Sanchez

Diana Adette

Jan Schatz

Yvette D. Clarke

Betsy L. Ryan

Bruce Haver

Tom Petri

Louise M. Slaughter

John Langer

Bill Pascoe Jr.

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Joyce Beatty

Ken O. Wapner

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson

Shirley Johnson

Caroline Braun

Luis Escobar

Niki Bongso

Juan Lopez

Erane Bonini

Michelle Diana Huelin

Jack Spri

Jack Gold

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