



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

**National Association of Regional Councils**

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October 28, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Sanders and Burr:

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), representing the nation's regional planning organizations and their local elected officials, supports the Committee's efforts to improve the delivery of services to the nation's elderly citizens through the introduction of S. 1562, the Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2013. NARC endorses the legislation and urges a bipartisan reauthorization of these critical programs to effectively and more efficiently serve older Americans.

NARC represents 250-plus member regional planning organizations (RPOs), which serve 97 percent of the U.S. counties and 99 percent of the population, including member RPOs that function as or work closely with local area agencies on aging. We encourage bipartisan collaboration through the legislative process to advance valuable OAA services and resources that secure economic stability and an acceptable quality of life for many of the nation's seniors. As the senior population continues to grow, RPOs are increasingly focused on preparing local communities to address the significant and unique needs of this aging demographic. Therefore, it is important that the OAA respond accordingly to allow state and area agencies the flexibility to adapt programs that help seniors age with dignity and independence. We are pleased that the current version of S. 1562 provides this local flexibility and refrains from imposing unfunded mandates or other onerous requirements on already resource-strapped service providers.

NARC supports increasing resources and assistance to the aging population in order to keep pace with inflation and the growing number of older adults, and we advocate for opportunities to alleviate the fiscal challenges service providers face, rejecting any decrease in authorized funding levels through 2018. We also support the addition of provisions in the current bipartisan draft to increase program efficiencies.

In order move forward with much-needed authorization, we respectfully request that upon full Committee approval, this measure receive timely consideration on the Senate floor.

Thank you for your renewed commitment to providing for the critical safety net of programs that focus on delivering the nutritional, transportation, healthcare, education and community services to the nation's seniors. We look forward to working with you and other members of the Committee to advance this vital piece of legislation. We also welcome any opportunity to partner with you to develop strong federal policies and strategic solutions that increase the effectiveness of federal dollars, and showcase local and regional successes. Please do not hesitate to contact NARC staff for more information – Fred Abousleman, Executive Director, [fred@narc.org](mailto:fred@narc.org) or 202.986.1032. Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Penelope A. Gross  
President, National Association of Regional Councils  
Supervisor, Fairfax County, VA