



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

## **Statement by n4a CEO Sandy Markwood On the Introduction of the “Older Americans Act Amendments of 2013” May 23, 2013**

n4a commends Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chairman of the Senate HELP Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, for his leadership on the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. The Older Americans Act bill he and his co-sponsors will introduce today represents the first movement in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress toward reauthorization of this vital law and the home and community-based programs and services for older adults that it provides.

We believe that the latest reauthorization bill represents real progress toward what must ultimately be a bipartisan, bicameral effort. By taking a streamlined approach to this legislation in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senator Sanders has shown his good faith in working toward that end. In this streamlining process, many provisions originally of concern to n4a have been removed or amended, which we believe enhances the quality of the resulting bill. While we are not formally endorsing the bill at this time, we are grateful for Senator Sanders’ leadership, his deep commitment to improving these critical OAA programs and services for vulnerable seniors, and his willingness to take into consideration the perspectives of the aging professionals who implement the Act at the local level.

We call on the leaders and members of the Senate HELP Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee to commit to advancing the OAA reauthorization process in this Congress. All stakeholders must be involved if we are to achieve our goal of a bipartisan update that modernizes the Act for current and future older Americans.

First and foremost, the Act works well. OAA programs and services keep millions of older adults healthy, independent and out of more-expensive nursing homes. OAA’s emphasis on local flexibility is critical to meeting this person-centered mission to help people age well in the location of their choice. OAA services and supports serve as the lifeline for older adults throughout the nation, helping them through the provision of efficient and cost-effective services such as a home-delivered meal, a ride to the doctor, a few hours a week of in-home supports and many other critical services. OAA supports the family caregivers of these older adults, as well, offering much-needed respite and other services to help them continue their essential caregiving duties.

n4a and our members will continue our educational outreach to lawmakers on how the Older Americans Act directly helps seniors and their caregivers in every single congressional district and state. *We owe this country’s older adults for their contributions to this great nation—we owe it to them to reauthorize the Older Americans Act.*

**The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)** is the umbrella organization for the 618 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and a voice in the nation’s capital for the 246 Title VI Native American aging programs in the U.S.

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