

**Laura Cameron, NYSAAAA**

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**From:** Amy Gotwals [agotwals@n4a.org]

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2009 5:13 PM

**To:** laura@nysaaaa.org

**Subject:** Advocacy Alert: Ask Your Senators to Sign on to Bipartisan Lincoln-Roberts OAA Letter



**April 23, 2009**

## **Ask Your Senators to Sign on to the Bipartisan Lincoln-Roberts OAA Letter**

Today, Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) circulated a letter to their colleagues requesting signatures in support of a request to Appropriations Subcommittee leaders to increase all titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA) funding for FY 2010.

**Lincoln-Roberts Dear Colleague Letter:** [http://www.n4a.org/files/Lincoln-Roberts\\_Dear\\_Colleague,\\_OAA\\_Funding\\_FY2010.pdf](http://www.n4a.org/files/Lincoln-Roberts_Dear_Colleague,_OAA_Funding_FY2010.pdf)

**Sign-On Letter to Appropriators:**  
[http://www.n4a.org/files/SEN\\_Letter\\_to\\_Labor-HHS,\\_OAA\\_Funding\\_FY\\_2010.pdf](http://www.n4a.org/files/SEN_Letter_to_Labor-HHS,_OAA_Funding_FY_2010.pdf)

The Lincoln-Roberts "Dear Colleague" letter acknowledges the critical need for an investment in the OAA, stating: "A significant investment in these programs is needed to respond to the pressures of population growth, years of erosion in programmatic capacity, and to keep up with inflation in these tough economic times."

(Note that the letter does not specify a percentage increase in its recommendation, as the recent [House letter](#) did. We are hopeful that this will enable a greater number of Senators to sign than in years past. You can feel free to use [n4a's OAA 12 Percent Campaign](#) materials in your advocacy, or you may wish to follow the lead of the Lincoln-Roberts letter in your correspondence on this matter.)

We need you to take action to urge your Senators to sign on to this letter to ensure that it receives the strong support needed for the Subcommittee to take this request

seriously.

### **Action Requested:**

→ Contact both of your Senators and ask them to sign on to the letter circulated by Senators Lincoln and Roberts. ***The deadline for signatures is Friday, May 1.***

- ✓ **STEP 1:** Call the DC office and ask for the staff member who handles Older Americans Act issues. You can reach them through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.
- ✓ **STEP 2:** Tell them about the Lincoln-Roberts letter and offer to email them a link to the letter if they have not already seen it.
- ✓ **STEP 3:** Let them know exactly why you want the Senator to sign on to the Lincoln-Roberts letter. Give local statistics that demonstrate the need for a significant increase in OAA funding.

→ [Please report to n4a](#) any interest you receive from your Senators or their staff in signing the letter—so that we can follow up as needed.

→ **Ask other advocates to do the same!** Urge colleagues, advisory board members, volunteers and clients to make calls to their Senators, as well. We have a short window of opportunity—**all signatures need to be on the letter by Friday, May 1**—so we need you and your colleagues to act fast!

### **Background:**

In 2006, the OAA was reauthorized to better meet Congress's vision of offering people greater choice, control and independence as they age by modernizing our country's system of long-term care. Appropriate funding to accomplish these worthy goals has not followed, however. Instead, most OAA programs have effectively been cut and suffered erosion in capacity as federal funding has not kept pace with inflation (e.g., food and fuel costs) or recognized increasing demographic need. Inadequate funding for OAA means that only an estimated six percent of eligible older Americans receive the home-delivered meal, transportation or other vital services for which they are eligible. Since FY 2004, federal OAA appropriations have failed to keep pace with growth in inflation and the aging population, leading to an \$800 million shortfall.

Yet the need for OAA programs among older adults and caregivers cannot be greater during these difficult economic times. There are now more than 37 million Americans over the age of 65, or 12.6 percent of the total U.S. population. As additional seniors and caregivers face financial troubles, more will come to need the bedrock programs created by the OAA. Furthermore, investing in OAA programs will save taxpayer dollars by reducing premature or costly Medicaid and Medicare expenditures as a result of unnecessary nursing home placement or poor management of nutrition and chronic health conditions.

The annual appropriations process that determines OAA funding in FY 2010 has just begun. This letter will be one of thousands sent to the Appropriations Committee's

leaders, asking for a particular funding level. To ensure that Senators Lincoln and Roberts are successful in their efforts to get the attention of the appropriators, we need to gather as many signatures on the letter as possible.

**If you have questions about this *Advocacy Alert***, please contact n4a's Public Policy and Legislative Affairs staff, Amy Gotwals and KJ Hertz, at 202.872.0888 or [agotwals@n4a.org](mailto:agotwals@n4a.org), [khertz@n4a.org](mailto:khertz@n4a.org).

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)  
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW  
Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 872-0888  
Fax: (202) 872-0057

To unsubscribe send email to [webmaster@n4a.org](mailto:webmaster@n4a.org)