

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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April 28, 2015

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Member, U.S. Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Member, U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Boxer and Feinstein,

The County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors urge you to reauthorize and invest in the Older Americans Act (OAA), for the continuation of assistance to millions of older Americans allowing them to remain healthy, economically secure, and independent in their homes and communities.

Since 1965, the OAA has provided services and supports that improve the lives of older Americans. These include meals, health programs, family caregiver support, help with benefits, job training and employment, senior centers, transportation, and protection against abuse.

Today, over 23 million older adults are economically insecure and nearly 9 million seniors are food insecure. Approximately 92% of older adults have at least one chronic disease, and 77% have at least two. Every 15 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 29 minutes, an older adult dies following a fall. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, traumatic brain injuries, and injury deaths. There are about 5 million elder abuse victims in America, yet for every case that is reported, 24 go unreported. The annual cost of elder financial exploitation is estimated to be \$2.9 billion, and the direct medical costs associated with elder abuse exceed \$5 billion. OAA services are critical in addressing issues such as these faced by older adults in our community and throughout the nation.

We urge you to support these important programs by reauthorizing the OAA, making needed investments, and protecting funding from sequestration. Not only will this benefit the seniors of our community, but it will also save taxpayer dollars by enabling seniors to stay out of nursing homes, prevent hunger and malnutrition, manage chronic health conditions, remain in the workforce, and avoid abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Brian K. Veerkamp, Chair
Board of Supervisors
El Dorado County