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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

August 16, 2024

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

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The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole,

Thank you for your leadership in maintaining our nation's commitment to America's senior citizens by continuing to support critical programs such as the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III-C Nutrition Program which helps seniors meet nutrition needs and maintain their independence at home.

With the FY25 appropriations process underway, I urge you to ensure that sufficient funding is provided for the OAA Title III-C Nutrition Services Program—a program that serves as an essential lifeline for millions of our nation's seniors, including many of my constituents. As you know, this program provides significant funding to the various Meals on Wheels programs throughout the country. In communities across my district, these programs provide a cornerstone of support to seniors facing hunger and isolation.

The impact of this funding is enormous. It allows over 250 million meals to be delivered, both to congregate settings and directly to individual homes, to nearly 2.2 million seniors annually—tens of thousands of whom live in New Jersey. The need for these services is so great that, for many seniors, the meals they receive through this program constitute much of their daily food intake.

Not only has the program delivered proven results in boosting seniors' nutritional and health outcomes, but it also offers significant support to those who wish to remain safe in their own homes as they continue to age. For example, a recent survey conducted by a meal provider in my district, Meals on Wheels of Ocean County, revealed that among program participants: 99% feel more confident living independently receiving home delivered meals; 97% are satisfied with the quality and variety of food; and 95% say receiving daily home delivered meals makes them feel less lonely. These results speak to the clear impact of this program in helping our nation's seniors thrive.

The consistent support the OAA Nutrition Program has received in the past has enabled great strides in reducing malnutrition and food insecurity, promoting social connection, and advancing the overall welfare of our country's senior citizens. Each year, partner organizations in my district like

Meals on Wheels of Ocean County, Meals on Wheels of Monmouth County, and others provide well over half a million meals to thousands of seniors. These organizations, along with their staff and volunteers, greatly depend on the funds provided under the OAA Nutrition Services Program to continue meeting the needs of the seniors they serve. Strengthened funding for FY25 will allow this effective community-based program to continue making a difference for senior health, safety, and relational well-being.

With the number of Americans aged 65 years and older set to continue increasing, the need for OAA programs and services will likewise rise and adequate funding for the OAA Title III-C Nutrition Services Program will only become more important. As the appropriations process for FY25 unfolds, I ask that you work to secure robust funding for nutrition service programs to meet this growing need and to ensure our communities receive these indispensable resources and services.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress