



## Older Americans Act Reauthorization Still Pending

February 2020

In January, the Senate and the House reached an agreement on a five-year reauthorization bill of the Older Americans Act (OAA), titled the *Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 (H.R. 4334)*. The agreement is still pending in the Senate. If it moves forward there, then it must be passed again by the House to become law. This will not happen at least until the House and Senate return from their Presidents' Day recess on February 24.

**Contact your Members of Congress while they are at home on recess (February 17-22) to express your support for the reauthorization!** Call through the Capitol Switchboard (202.224.3121) or visit [house.gov](http://house.gov) and [senate.gov](http://senate.gov) to find office contact information for your members of Congress.

## President's FY 2021 Budget Proposal Released

On February 10, President Trump released his budget proposal for FY 2021, which marks the start of the process to determine funding levels for the upcoming fiscal year. As expected, the President's proposal contains severe cuts to many aging-related programs, including:

- Elimination of the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which provides older adults with employment opportunities
- Elimination of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides low-income older adults with food boxes
- Elimination of Senior Corps, a service program for older adults, which includes the Benjamin Rose Senior Companion Program
- Elimination of the Community Services Block Grant, the Social Services Block Grant, and the Community Development Block Grant, all of which fund vital programs like Adult Protective Services and Meals on Wheels
- Elimination of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps pay utility bills of low-income older adults

The proposal would maintain funding at FY 2020 levels for the Older Americans Act (OAA) nutrition programs and OAA home and community-based services, among other OAA programs. The budget proposal also has proposals to change the implementation of federal programs impacting the "younger old." For example, the proposal would raise the work requirement age for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to include all adults aged 18-64 without disabilities. (Currently, the SNAP work requirement age is capped at 49.) The proposal would also reduce spending on the Social Security Disability Insurance program (SSDI), which disproportionately impacts people over 60.

Readers should keep in mind that the budget proposal is just that: a proposal. Congress is free to disregard the budget proposal, just as it has in the past. Advocates must work with Congress in a bipartisan manner to encourage them to reject this proposal and move forward with continued increases for the vital programs serving our nation's older adults.

## Contact Us

We welcome your feedback!

Please share questions, suggestions or concerns.

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## Cuyahoga County Issue 33: Health and Human Services Levy

On March 17, Cuyahoga County voters will be asked to support the Health and Human Services levy, Issue 33.

Every year, more than 400,000 people from more than 200,000 families access Cuyahoga County's health and human services system. The county's financial support for these services comes primarily from two countywide health and human services property tax levies.

Nearly 80% of these dollars are used to provide services to five groups with critical needs:

- Children who are at risk of abuse and neglect
- People with mental illnesses or an addiction
- People with serious health issues
- Victims of crime
- Older adults and people with disabilities

Issue 33 is a replacement levy of 4.7 mills. Under Issue 33, property owners would pay an additional \$41 a year for every \$100,000 in property value— a little less than \$3.50 per month.

## Aging Policy Priorities

If you missed our January webinar on Aging Policy Priorities, you can now view the recording. The webinar, with Benjamin Rose President & CEO Orion Bell, Robert Blancato, President of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) and Meredith Ponder Whitmire, Vice President of Matz, Blancato and Associates and Policy and Advocacy Director for NANASP, highlighted current issues in public policy that impact older adults and their caregivers at the federal level and in Ohio.

View the webinar at [benrose.org/advocacy](http://benrose.org/advocacy).