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6/17/2016

Chairman Harold Rogers  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Room H-305  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Nita M. Lowey  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Room H-305  
Washington, D.C. 20515

*President*  
**Gary Jessee**  
Texas

Chairman Tom Cole  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies

*First Vice President*  
**James Rothrock**  
Virginia

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

*Second Vice President*  
**Lora Connolly**  
California

*Secretary*  
**Patti Killingsworth**  
Tennessee

On behalf of the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), I am writing to express our support for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the Community Service Employment for Older Americans (CSEOA) program. NASUAD represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and supports visionary state leadership, the advancement of state systems innovation and the articulation of national policies that support home and community based services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Each of our members oversees the implementation of the Older Americans Act (OAA), and many also serve as the operating agency in their state for Medicaid waivers that serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. Together with our members, we work to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering home and community based services and supports for people who are older or have a disability and for their caregivers.

*Treasurer*  
**Donna Harvey**  
Iowa

*Past President*  
**Lance Robertson**  
Oklahoma

*At-Large*  
**Alice Bonner**  
Massachusetts

**Jed Ziegenhagen**  
Colorado

As you know, the Senate Committee on Appropriations recently cleared the FY2017 appropriations package for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies. While we appreciate that the Committee included increased funding for Elder Justice Activities, we are concerned about the \$34 million reduction to CSEOA and the elimination of all funding for SHIP. The population of older adults has been increasing drastically over the decade, and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Approximately 10,000 Americans are estimated to turn 65 every day between 2011 and 2030. This growing population continues to stress the nation's health and human services, and meeting the needs of senior citizens requires a combination of innovative approaches and targeted funding increases. At this crucial juncture, we should be increasing funding for services and supports that assist these individuals engage in

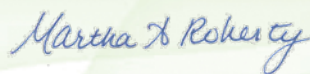
employment and better understand their health care options. Therefore, NASUAD strongly opposes the reductions under consideration.

The SHIP program provides crucial education and assistance to individuals as they navigate the complex Medicare system. Medicare beneficiaries have a wide array of complex decisions to make regarding selecting a Part D plan, as well as deciding whether to enroll in Medicare Advantage or purchase a Medigap plan. Each of these choices has a specific and individualized impact on services, cost-sharing, and premium structures. The SHIP program is a source of one-on-one counseling to help these individuals understand their options and the ramifications of these choices. The SHIP program relies heavily on trained volunteers to provide the counseling, many of whom are seniors themselves. SHIP counselors also help individuals access supports available for low-income recipients. Millions of individuals are able to use these essential supports each year. Although the Senate committee report includes an expectation that CMS and ACL will continue to provide assistance to Medicare recipients, it is unreasonable to expect these agencies to provide the same volume of support or to have the localized expertise necessary to provide individualized advice and expertise.

Similarly, the CSEOA program, which is often referred to as the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), is a crucial component of service delivery for older Americans. Many individuals are staying engaged in the workforce for a longer period and many older adults require assistance with job placements. According to a recent NASUAD report, 20% of seniors and people with disabilities indicated an interest in being employed yet only 2% of the surveyed population was employed. This is particularly true for seniors: 25% of individuals without jobs enrolled in aging Medicaid programs and 16% of individuals receiving OAA services indicated a desire to be employed.<sup>1</sup> Based on the desire of individuals to continue working and the growing number of older adults who would require assistance from CSEOA, we do not believe that reductions should be made to this program.

We ask the House to fully fund SHIP and CSEOA to ensure that the crucial supports and services are continued for individuals who need them most. If you have any questions, please contact Damon Terzaghi of my staff at [dterzaghi@nasuad.org](mailto:dterzaghi@nasuad.org) or (202) 898-2578.

Sincerely,



Martha A. Roherty  
Executive Director  
NASUAD

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nasuad.org/sites/nasuad/files/NCI-AD%202015-2016%20Six%20State%20Mid-Year%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>