

**CCoA**  
California Commission on Aging

# AGEWATCH

## NEW SENATE REPORT URGES AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE REFORM

A new report released in January by California Senate Select Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care urges major reform of California's system of programs, services and support for the aging and disabled adults.

Chaired by Senator Carol Liu, of La Cañada Flintridge, the Committee's final report, "**A Shattered System: Reforming Long-Term Care in California**," identifies problem areas and makes 30 recommendations for reform to enable elderly and disabled adults to live with dignity, choice, and independence and avoid unnecessary institutionalization. Recommendations include state agency reorganization, better integration and coordination among programs, and expanded home and community-based services.

"California is long overdue for a system overhaul," said Senator Liu. "With limited funding, overlapping programs, and no centralized leader, the state's fragmented system is almost impossible for consumers and their caregivers to navigate."

The report also describes serious and growing gaps in the workforce needed to provide a range of services and supports, especially in rural areas. The research-driven recommendations include a call for cultural competency among aging and long term care medical services and support providers to meet the needs of an ethnically diverse aging population. Copies of the report can be obtained online at: <http://sd25.senate.ca.gov> or <http://sd25.senate.ca.gov/sites/sd25.senate.ca.gov/files/AgingLong%20TermCareReport.pdf>

### **2015 White House Conference on Aging Regional Forums Announced**

New developments in plans for the 2015 White House Conference on Aging have been announced by the White House, including five regional forums in Tampa, FL on February 19, Phoenix, AZ on March 31, Seattle, WA on April 9, Cleveland, OH on April 27, and Boston, MA on May 28. Cecilia Muñoz, Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council said the regional events will be co-sponsored by AARP and are being planned in coordination with the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations. "Each will allow us to hear directly from the public on issues such as ensuring retirement security, promoting healthy aging, providing long-term services and support, and protecting older Americans from financial exploitation, abuse, and neglect. They will also help us to reach older Americans and their caregivers, advocates, and other stakeholders." To read Ms. Muñoz' full comments on the White House blog, visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/01/13/regional-forums-provide-input-and-ideas-2015-white-house-conference-aging>

Information from the Administration for Community Living, Tuesday, January 13, 2015

AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834.

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## Older Americans Act Reauthorization on the Fast Track: Approved Unanimously by the Senate HELP Committee on Wednesday

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee voted unanimously this week to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA), making the action one of its first markups of the 114th Congress, according to reports from the National Council on Aging (NCOA).

Chairman Alexander (R-TN) relied on bipartisan support for passage the Older Americans Act bill, S. 192, which builds upon nearly identical legislation that the committee adopted in 2013.

According to National Area Agency on Aging Association (n4a) CEO Sandy Markwood,

“Passage of the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2015 by the Senate HELP Committee puts us one step closer to ensuring that older adults can age in place and remain independent in their homes and communities for as long as possible. n4a’s members work on the front lines of aging every day, doing their part to realize the vision of the Older Americans Act in communities all across the country, and we appreciate this swift and sensible action early in the new 114th Congress. We look forward to working toward full Senate passage and House consideration of this legislation.”

S. 192 reflects a number of NCOA’s and other advocates’ priorities for OAA reauthorization, including provisions that:

- Create new support for modernizing multipurpose senior centers
- Highlight the importance of addressing economic needs
- Require that health promotion and disease prevention initiatives be evidence-based
- Promote chronic disease self-management and falls prevention

Two noteworthy differences from last year’s OAA bill are a revision in the federal-to-state formula for Title III funding and the elimination of language proposed in 2014 to authorize a study on senior transportation due to the report’s finalization last year. The new Title III funding formula amends current OAA “hold harmless” provisions, providing that for each of the next three years the OAA is authorized and the formula is adjusted to reflect changes in states’ senior populations, every state is guaranteed to receive at least 99% of its Title III allocation from the previous year.

To read more about S. 192 and read the Senate HELP Committee’s summary, [visit http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/older-americans-act/](http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/older-americans-act/).

*Information excerpted from NCOA Week, 1.17.2015, Senate Moves Swiftly on OAA Reauthorization in Anniversary Year and n4a Legislative Update - OAA Reauthorization Approved By Senate HELP Committee, January 28, 2015.*



Meals on Wheels is one of the community-based programs operated nation-wide through the Older Americans Act.

## “Demographic Dividend” concept advanced by Irish geriatrician Desmond O’Neill, winner of the GSA 2014 Samuel T. Freeman Award

Dr. Desmond O’Neill, of Trinity College, Ireland, was awarded the Joseph T. Freeman Award at the 67<sup>th</sup> annual scientific meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, held in Washington D.C in November. The Samuel T. Freeman Award is given to a prominent physician in the field of aging – both in research and practice – who is a member of the Society’s Health Sciences section.

Dr. O’Neill’s approach focuses on the benefits of and growth possible in the aging mind. “The narrative has been a simplistic one of loss and decline,” said O’Neill, professor of Medical Gerontology at Trinity College and consultant physician in geriatric and stroke medicine at the Tallaght Hospital campus. “There’s a huge swing back against that. “We’ve got to recognize growth in later life. And also not only recognize growth, but also the extraordinary abilities of people in later life to cope with the existential problems they have.”

This concept, described as “the Demographic Dividend” by Dr. O’Neill, was presented to the UCLA Geriatrics program during his U.S. visit in November. In the lecture, he eloquently described the “radical creativity” of late life associated with many famous painters, writers and composers.

He challenged leaders in the field of aging to strongly communicate and advocate for the enormous pay-off of maintaining health late into life, for personal benefit as well as for families and society as a whole. Hence, aging should not be viewed as a burden but as a dividend. *Information from Commissioner Steve Castle, M.D., of the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Geriatrics Division, and Irish Echo, Aging sees growth and loss; O’Neill, January 6, 2015, <http://irishecho.com/2015/01/06/>*



Dr. Marilyn Gugliucci (R) presented the Samuel T. Freeman Award to Dr. O’Neill in November.

## Innovative Partnership leads to Renovation of Blythe Senior Center

Senior citizens in the town of Blythe have a safe, accessible and vital place to gather for meals, programs and functions for years to come, thanks to a joint project of Riverside County and the City of Blythe.



The city and county partnered to fund the \$400,000 renovation, which brought the kitchen up to commercial standards, reconfigured sidewalks and parking to better accommodate seniors with disabilities, as well as added new flooring, energy-efficient lighting fixtures, updated bathrooms, automated front doors, upgraded air conditioning and a refreshed exterior with new landscaping.

The Riverside County Office on Aging (RCOA) provides the senior nutrition program and “Fit After 50” exercise program at the center. Approximately 60 meals are served to seniors every weekday and an additional 30 are served through the homebound delivery program.

Officials celebrating completion of the project this month included County Supervisor John Benoit and RCOA Director Michele Haddock.

*Information from Riverside County District 4 Supervisor John J Benoit press release: Riverside County, City of Blythe to Celebrate Renovation of Blythe Community Center, January 5, 2015.*

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## California Senior Special Fund educates and builds capacity of California's Area Agency on Aging Advisory Councils

Older California taxpayers can assist the work of their local Area Agency on Aging through their state tax check-off contributions to the California Senior Special Fund. California seniors who are 65 years of age or older as of December 31, 2014, and claim the Senior Exemption Credit on Form 540 or 540 A line 9, can contribute \$102 per person, or \$204 for qualifying couples. Contributions entered to this fund support education and training for the state's 33 Area Agency of Aging Advisory Councils (TACC), who guide the work of the local Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior Special Fund is line 400 of your state income tax form.

To learn more about TACC, visit the organization's website at [www.4TACC.org](http://www.4TACC.org).



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January 2015

### Upcoming Events

- February 9 -- 11 -- LeadingAge California Policy & Leadership Summit, Sacramento. Information at [www.aging.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1](http://www.aging.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1)
- February 24-25 -- Triple A Council of California, Vagabond Hotel, Sacramento. Information at [www.4tacc.org](http://www.4tacc.org)
- February 25 -- LeadingAge California Human Resources Conference, Burbank, CA. Information at <http://www.aging.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=2691>
- March 23 - 27 -- Aging in America Conference, Chicago, ILL. Information and registration at <http://asaging.org/aia>
- March 31 - April 2, California Commission on Aging, Sheraton Grand Hotel Sacramento. Information and agendas at [www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov).

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