

business with Senator BRYAN to be recognized at 11 a.m. and Senator DOMENICI to be recognized at 11:30 a.m.

Following morning business, it is hoped the Senate can resume consideration of the Older Americans Act, with votes expected on two Gregg amendments as well as a vote on final passage. The House is expected to consider the D.C. appropriations conference report, the tax bill, and a continuing resolution today. Therefore, Senators can expect votes during this afternoon's session.

I thank my colleagues for their attention on this matter.

Let me also at this point, on behalf of the majority leader, propound a unanimous consent.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 782

Mr. DEWINE. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 782, regarding the Older Americans Act, and it be considered under the following terms: 30 minutes for debate on the bill equally divided in the usual form; that the only amendments in order be the following: One amendment offered by Senator GREGG relating to title V, which would be 2 hours equally divided for that particular amendment, and an additional amendment offered by Senator GREGG relating to title V, and that would be 2 hours equally divided as well, with no other amendments or motions in order to the bill.

I further ask unanimous consent that following the use or yielding back of time on each amendment, the Senate proceed to a vote on each amendment. Further, I ask that, following the disposition of the above amendments, the bill be read the third time and the Senate then proceed to passage of H.R. 782, as amended, if amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I say to my friend from Ohio who read the unanimous consent request, the substance of the agreement is fine with the minority. We would only hope that there could be a definite time locked in for a vote. During the last couple of weeks, there have been a lot of Members who simply have not known when they were going to be called upon to vote. They have other business they are conducting. We, again, have no disagreement with the substance of the unanimous consent agreement. However, we object unless we can get a definite time as to when we can vote.

I also say, through the Chair to my friend from Ohio, it is not as if there are a number of votes being anticipated here so that we are going to slow things up if you set, for example, 5 o'clock, which we would suggest, as a definite time for voting on these amendments. So until we can get a definite time locked in for voting on

the amendments, at or about 5 o'clock, we would object, and I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, if I could, let me thank my colleague from Nevada. I understand there is no objection, actually, to the substance, then, of the agreement and what we are waiting for is some agreement with regard to the actual time the votes will actually take place. Is that correct?

Mr. REID. Yes. I say to my friend, we believe it is a very important piece of legislation. We are glad it is here. We think the time arrangement on the amendments offered by the Senator from New Hampshire is fair. We simply believe we need a time certain to vote. That should be easy to get. I hope the majority leader will agree to that as soon as possible.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank my colleague.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, as the lead sponsor of the Older Americans Act, along with my friend, the chairman of the committee, Senator JEFFORDS, I thought I would take a few moments, even though we are not technically on the bill at this point, to begin a discussion of this bill. I make note to my colleagues in the Chamber that I will be a few minutes in doing this, so if any of my colleagues do want to proceed in morning business on other matters, I will be more than happy to yield when they come to the floor.

We will begin today a debate about a bill that has been long in coming. Previous Congresses have had difficulty reaching agreement on reauthorizing the Older Americans Act for any number of reasons, and previous Congresses have failed to do that. But I think anyone who works in this field, anyone who understands what is going on with the Older Americans Act, knows it is past time for Congress to reauthorize the bill.

This is a bipartisan program. It is a program that dates over 35 years. It is a program that delivers great services to the senior citizens of this country. What we have done in this bill in a very bipartisan fashion is to bring it up to date to meet the needs of senior citizens entering this new century.

This bill is going to help ensure the continuation of valuable supportive services for lower income older Americans. It will establish new and reliable

services from which every older American can benefit and provide support for those caring for older adults.

This reauthorization would not be a reality if it were not for the persistent, bipartisan efforts and dedication of the Senate Aging Subcommittee ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee chairman, Senator JEFFORDS and the ranking member, Senator KENNEDY; the House Education and the Workforce Committee chairman, Congressman GOODLING, and the ranking member, Congressman CLAY; as well as the House Postsecondary Education, Training, and Life-Long Learning Subcommittee Chairman MCKEON and Congressman MARTINEZ. Each has worked tirelessly on this legislation, along with the members and staff of the Senate Aging Subcommittee, the full Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and the Senate Select Committee on Aging.

I also thank additional colleagues, such as Senator HAGEL, Senator COLLINS, and Senator WYDEN, for their insights and contributions to reaching a bipartisan agreement on this bill. I will mention later the great work that Senator GRASSLEY has also done to offer a new provision in this bill which, again, meets the needs of seniors in this century. Because of this support and help, we are going to see the Older Americans Act finally reauthorized.

Reauthorization attempts in both the 104th and 105th Congresses failed for many reasons. So as chairman of the Aging Subcommittee, I introduced S. 1536, with the hope we could get a reauthorization passed in this Congress. At the end of this past July, our committee marked up that bill and developed a solid piece of legislation that reflects months of hard work and deliberation. I am very pleased that yesterday the House of Representatives passed this bill overwhelmingly by a vote of 405-2. They passed their reauthorization bill which represents the combined legislative efforts of both the House and the Senate.

I point out to my colleagues that one of the things we did as we worked through this bill for the last 2 years was to work with the House Members on both sides of the aisle so we would finally emerge with a consensus bill and a bill we would be able to pass in both the Senate and the House.

This reauthorization bill we have before us today represents a modernized and streamlined Older Americans Act and one that maintains some of the most important and successful programs the Federal Government provides for our senior citizens.

As an editorial in a newspaper in my home State of Ohio, the Cincinnati Post, on September 20, 1999, stated:

The Older Americans Act has been the closest thing on record to a national policy on aging.

That is a pretty strong statement, but it is true. It is true because the

Older Americans Act created and is responsible for programs that do the following: Provide nutrition both at home and at senior community centers; protect the elderly from abuse, neglect, and unhealthy nursing homes; offer valuable jobs to seniors; furnish transportation which is so vital for the way seniors live today; and render valuable in-home services such as homemaker and home health aides, chore services, respite care, and personal care services.

To be sure, as our senior population grows larger and larger, these services and many others become more and more important—not just important but, in many cases, essential to maintain the quality of life of our senior citizens, central to the continued well being and prosperity of our aging senior community. That is why it is fundamental to the security of our seniors that we reauthorize, protect, and improve the Older Americans Act. Our reauthorization bill does just that.

First, it will permit States to implement cost sharing for some of the services provided under the Older Americans Act. This means that States will be able to obtain payments from wealthier seniors for services. Doing so enables States to expand services to additional older individuals.

This is something that was asked for by the people who testified in our committee. They told us the current rules and regulations were complicated, very difficult to understand, and were being interpreted differently from county to county within a State, such as my State of Ohio.

Working in a bipartisan fashion, we put together the language that will make it much easier for these laws to be administered.

Second, our authorization will increase flexibility for States by authorizing the Assistant Secretary on Aging to issue waivers to States with certain provisions of the Older Americans Act. This flexibility will help eliminate obsolete, duplicative, and burdensome requirements of a State plan and the area plan.

Third, our bill includes the first major changes to the Senior Community Service Employment Program, title V. It begins to change the allocation of funds between the States and the organizations that provide jobs. It allocates 75 percent of the first \$35 million in additional funding for the program to the States and 25 percent to organizations. Any increase in funding over \$35 million will be split 50-50 between the States and the national organizations. Historically, the funding split has been practically the reverse, with 78 percent allocated to national sponsors and 22 percent to the States. This is an improvement that has received bipartisan support of the Governors across the country.

Let me stop for a moment and say how much we have relied on the Governors as we have fashioned this bill and how much they support this bill. This bill is supported by the NGA; it is

supported by the southern Governors. It has received a great deal of support and help from them. We thank them for that support.

Additionally, our bill provides Governors greater responsibility and influence over the allocation of title V job slots within their States, and it includes performance measures that all organizations and States must meet. Failure to meet such standards will result in the loss of job slots. Those slots then will be redistributed through open competition and will help eliminate poorly performing grantees in the program—one more way the Governors will have more say in title V and more say in how these slots are allocated and, not only a say in how they are allocated, but a say in what happens with them, and they will have the ability to measure the success or failure of these programs.

These improvements are the result of our efforts to make sure our reauthorization bill addresses the most important concerns facing older Americans. That is why even before drafting the reauthorization bill, as chairman of the Aging Subcommittee, we held six subcommittee hearings covering titles of the existing law.

I see on the floor my colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, who played such a major role in those committee hearings. In fact, those six hearings were very helpful in eliciting information to make this a better bill.

At one of those hearings, for example, we heard from Reeve Lindbergh, the daughter of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Her mom was subjected, according to her testimony, to 10 years of financial and other abuse and, as Reeve pointed out: "It"—referring to that type of elder abuse—"can happen to anyone."

Because of similar testimony, we included language in the reauthorization to protect elders not only from physical abuse and neglect but also from financial abuse and exploitation. We also added language to coordinate State and local advocacy and protection services directly to State and local law enforcement agencies, as well as linking them to the court system.

I will now turn to a provision that has bipartisan support and whose lead sponsor is my friend, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY. This is the National Caregiver Support Act which is an integral part of this bill.

Another one of our Aging Subcommittee hearings focused on the bill I just referenced, the National Family Caregiver Support Act, which Senator GRASSLEY sponsored, along with Senators BREAUX, BRYAN, DODD, HUTCHINSON, KOHL, LINCOLN, MIKULSKI, REED from Rhode Island, REID from Nevada, SANTORUM, and WYDEN.

Following moving testimony from people such as Carolyn Erwin-Johnson from Baltimore, MD, we included this important act as a provision in our reauthorization bill. At our subcommittee hearing, Carolyn spoke

movingly of one of the most important aspects of the Caregiver Support Act—the need for respite care. Let me explain.

When her elderly mother became unable to care for herself anymore, Carolyn decided against placing her in a nursing home. She chose, instead, to care for her mom at home. When her mother first moved in with her, Carolyn said she had to discontinue her doctorate program. She had to find a job and more accommodating hours. Unfortunately, and not surprisingly, that job also paid less money.

Carolyn continued in her testimony that she needed advice about lifting her mother, feeding her mom, medications, and many other challenges, things she had not faced before in her life, and most of us have not.

Most of all, however, because of her mother's constant care needs, Carolyn testified that she just needed some rest, she just needed a break. With the National Family Caregiver Support Act provision included in our reauthorization, Carolyn will get that break in the form of respite care—someone to take over for her for maybe a weekend, maybe a day, maybe just a few hours, so she can shop for herself and complete some overtime work or just rest. Again, this is an attempt to bring this bill up to date and to authorize the type of services that are so very important today.

In addition to respite care, the Caregiver Support Act brings an intergenerational element to the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

During an Aging Subcommittee field hearing we held in Cleveland, we heard from grandparents who, for any number of reasons, were caring for their grandchildren, raising their grandkids. In some cases their own children were addicted to drugs or were in prison or died. There are any number of reasons why these folks were doing something that we did not see done that much 20 or 30 or 40 years ago but something that is, frankly, very common today. Rather than relinquishing their grandchildren to foster care, these grandparents took on the responsibility of raising them and keeping the family together. That is something that we in Congress should support when people make that choice.

The grandparents who testified in front of our committee in Cleveland are not alone. The number of grandparents raising children is growing and growing. In fact, a Census Bureau report released last year indicated that 3.9 million children in the United States were living in homes maintained by their grandparents. That is up an astounding 75 percent since 1970.

A 1998 study by the University of Cincinnati found that grandparents are caring for their grandchildren in 10 percent of Ohio households with children, and of that 10 percent, approximately 32,000 grandparents statewide are the sole providers for their grandchildren. Amazing figures.

Let's look at the example of a Cleveland woman in her early seventies named Bertha. At our hearing last year, she told us her story. She told us about the difficulties she faced in taking on the responsibility of raising her three great-nephews—Clarence, age 12; Joseph, age 11; and Christopher, age 10.

The boys' father—a horribly sad story—died from AIDS. Their drug-addicted mother was simply in no shape to take care of them at all. Someone needed to take care of those boys, so Bertha took them in.

When the three boys first moved into Bertha's home, she had no way to support them financially. To be eligible for assistance, she became a licensed foster mother. But despite doing so, a full year went by before the county gave her any financial assistance at all. Additionally, she testified it has been very difficult getting information about available services. In the process, she has encountered mounds of bureaucratic redtape.

New information and assistance services in the Older Americans Reauthorization Act, as well as the respite care and support groups provided in the Caregiver Support Program, will provide much needed assistance to people, relatives, great-aunts, grandparents—people such as Bertha, people who have taken on a tremendous responsibility many years after raising their own children, many years, I am sure, after they thought they would ever be doing this.

Many older Americans who are now raising children for the second time need information, and they need respite care. Our bill would provide those kinds of services.

I see my colleagues on the floor, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator KENNEDY. And Senator JEFFORDS will be here in a moment. Let me conclude for now by saying that this is a long time in coming. It is a good reauthorization bill. It is the product of a great deal of work by many Members of this Chamber. It is a bill we can all be proud of, a bill we can be proud today to pass and send to the President. Our reauthorization bill makes the most substantial reforms in the Older Americans Act since its creation.

Our bill is a key step toward preparing for the demographic tidal wave of aging baby boomers in the next few decades. The fact is that we are an aging nation. Today, 12.7 percent of the U.S. population is over the age of 65. By the year 2030, that number will grow to 20 percent. There is no indication that this trend will slow anytime soon.

Americans, thank heavens, are living longer, making it all the more pressing we ensure that supportive services exist for every older American now and in the future. By working together, on a bipartisan and bicameral basis—both sides of the aisle; both the House and the Senate—we have crafted a bill that will make a lasting contribution to all older Americans; and that is something

we can all be proud of as a major accomplishment as this 106th Congress ends.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all, I thank Senator DEWINE and Senator JEFFORDS for their leadership. As Senator DEWINE has pointed out, this has been a long, continuing struggle for the last 2 years. This has been a bipartisan struggle. We are grateful for the efforts of the House of Representatives.

I wish to say on our side, the real champion for this program is on my left, Senator MIKULSKI, from the State of Maryland, who over the period of these last 2 years has been an absolutely tireless advocate on this particular issue, as she has been on so many others. We would not be here this morning in the final hours of this session if not for her strength and determination to see this measure move ahead.

I think what she and others have understood is that it has been 5 years since we have seen this important legislation expire. As a result, we have seen even funding on the Older Americans Act. In that respect, there has been a falling behind in the attention to the services for our senior citizens.

This is a much better bill than the last authorization; and it will benefit our senior population in a much more sensitive and extensive way. Hopefully, it will gain acceptance and support from our colleagues in the Senate and the House and will be sent to the President so we can strengthen the outreach programs that are lifelines to our senior citizens.

So I pay particular tribute to my colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, for her leadership. I thank the administration and President Clinton for the strong priority that he has placed on this and the attention that the Secretary has given to getting this action.

I think most of us know we are operating in a very highly charged political atmosphere as we are coming to the last 2 weeks of a political campaign for election to the House and the Senate. But the House of Representatives yesterday passed this bill 405-2. We are very hopeful that we will have a similar outcome. It does indicate that when people of good will want to move a process forward, it can be done. I commend all of those who have worked over a very considerable period of time and have really tried to find common ground on some very difficult and complex issues.

Finally, I wish to highlight the very important aspects of this legislation. I think the most powerful and obviously important parts are the nutrition programs, which have been the largest and the longest standing of the programs—this traces back to 1965. Meals on Wheels and congregate meals have been an incredibly important program in permitting so many of our seniors to

live at home, and also to benefit from nutritious meals in these congregate sites. It is an important nutritional aspect for many of our seniors who are hard pressed.

This bill's value in terms of our elderly population cannot really be measured in terms of dollars and cents. It includes important preventive health programs, absolutely essential transportation programs, and important employment opportunities as well. These opportunities enable many of our seniors continue to be useful, constructive, and productive workers, primarily focused on serving communities.

There are extraordinary workers under this program. I have met so many of them in travels around my own State of Massachusetts. What they do in terms of adding an additional dimension of services in local communities is really extraordinary. Many people believe, with regard to programs in which they are particularly interested, that they get a great bang for the buck. This Nation, with this program, gets enormous advantages in terms of permitting our seniors to live in the kind of peace and dignity and with a degree of security in these areas which they would be hard pressed to have if this legislation were not on the books.

The Older Americans Act was enacted in 1965, three years after I was first elected to the Senate. I am proud to have been one of its original supporters. Over the years since then, we have repeatedly expanded the act to meet more of the needs facing older citizens.

Today, the Senate is about to approve a reauthorization of the act which keeps faith with the nation's senior citizens. Current law supports a broad array of home-based and community-based support services to enhance the health and well-being of persons over sixty years of age. This legislation preserves and strengthens these programs, which provide vital links between senior citizens and their communities.

For seniors who are healthy and active, the act offers community service employment opportunities, preventive health services, and transportation services. It also supports a range of social activities, including congregate meals. The act supports more than 6,400 multipurpose senior citizen centers across the country.

For those frail seniors who lack mobility, it helps to maintain a lifeline to the outside world. It provides daily home-delivered meals, in-home care services, home-maker services, and transportation to doctors and other caregivers, and it supports programs to protect vulnerable seniors from abuse and exploitation. The long-term care ombudsman program investigates and resolves complaints of elderly residents of nursing home facilities and other adult care homes.

These programs make a significant difference for those they were designed

to help. This legislation reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that older Americans continue to receive the services which are so essential to their quality of life. This reauthorization means increased federal financial support of these very worthwhile programs.

Of all the Older American Act programs, nutrition assistance is the largest and longest running. It was created as a response to disturbing evidence that, due to poverty and isolation, many senior citizens were suffering from serious nutrition deficiencies, and that the lack of good nutrition was contributing to their poor health.

Today, under the act, we are providing over 240 million meals a year to over 3 million senior citizens. Approximately half of these meals are provided in congregate social settings and the other half are delivered daily through the Meals on Wheels program to seniors in their homes. This program has broad-based community support. The many volunteers who deliver meals to the home-bound have greatly expanded the reach of the act. Unfortunately, we have not had sufficient resources to fully meet the need. Passage of this legislation will mean a substantial increase in the level of funding for these vital nutrition programs.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program, authorized by title V of the act, is the nation's only employment and training program aimed exclusively at low-income older persons—and it will have an increasingly important role as the Baby Boom generation ages. The nation will have 1.4 million more low-income persons over the age of 55 in the year 2005 than there were in 1995, and many of them will want to continue working.

Title V serves over 90,000 low-income elderly persons every year. Eighty percent of these participants are age 60 or over, and 16 percent are above 75 years of age. The jobs obtained through this program provide these men and women with needed economic support. But it does much more than that. It keeps them active and involved in their communities, not isolated at home. It provides opportunities to make important contributions to their communities and to learn new skills—and it enhances their sense of dignity and self-esteem. In this legislation, we have significantly strengthened the Community Service Employment Program and provided for its much-needed expansion.

As part of this legislation, we have also created a National Family Caregiver Support Program to help families who care for ill or disabled parents or elderly relatives at home. We know how difficult it can become for a family when an elderly person needs a high degree of continuous care. We know the importance of keeping a frail senior at home in a loving environment whenever it is medically possible. This new program will provide essential support services to help these seniors remain

with their loved ones. These families deserve our assistance, and this new program will ensure that they receive it.

Family caregivers will be able to obtain a broad range of support services, including respite care, in-home assistance, training in caregiver skills, and family counseling, all of which will make a major difference for these vulnerable seniors and their families. The federal government will fund 75 percent of the cost of these services, and the states will fund the remainder. We have authorized \$125 million for the first year of this new effort, and we anticipate the program will grow in succeeding years.

This reauthorization of the Older Americans Act is the product of a two-year bipartisan effort. Senators JEFFORDS, DEWINE, MILULSKI, and I share a common commitment to preserving and strengthening these programs, which have done so much to improve the lives of millions of senior citizens. We also shared a common determination to break through the barriers which prevented reauthorization in the last two Congresses. I commend my three colleagues for their leadership in fashioning this legislation. Because of the bipartisan spirit in which they approached this task, they made the difficult possible.

I also commend the important role of the Clinton administration. The Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services have been extremely helpful throughout the reauthorization effort. President Clinton deserves particular credit for proposing creation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

The legislation before us is supported by the National Governors' Assn. and by nearly fifty organizations, which represent senior citizens, including: The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations; American Association of Retired Persons; National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging; National Association of State Units on Aging; Meals on Wheels Association of America; Generations United; Green Thumb; National Council of Senior Citizens; National Urban League; National Council on Aging; National Caucus and Center on Black Aged; National Association for Hispanic Elderly; National Asian Pacific Center on Aging; National Indian Council on Aging; Alzheimer's Association; American Society on Aging; Gerontological Society of America; Association of Jewish Aging Services; National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys; Older Women's League; National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs; and National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs.

I ask unanimous consent that letters of support from a number of these organizations may be placed in the RECORD. Their strong support demonstrates that this bill will truly ben-

efit the older Americans it is designed to serve, and I urge the Senate to approve it.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION,

Washington, DC, October 17, 2000.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. THOMAS A. DASCHLE,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER LOTT AND MINORITY LEADER DASCHLE: As the end of the 106th Congress approaches, the nation's Governors urge you to help the states provide critical support and services for the nation's seniors by reauthorizing the Older Americans Act (OAA).

This law has established the primary framework in the states for the delivery of vital support and nutritional services to seniors. Reauthorization of this important program will demonstrate a federal commitment to these critical issues, and will be crucial for ensuring that seniors continue to receive key OAA services.

The authorization for the OAA expired in 1995, and the law has not been reauthorized in the past five years. This lack of legal authority puts OAA programs and funding at risk. After considerable negotiation and compromise, we now understand that the current proposal enjoys broad bipartisan support. We therefore ask that you move quickly to ensure the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act this year.

Sincerely,

GOVERNOR JIM HODGES,
Chair, Human Resources Committee,
State of South Carolina.

GOVERNOR BOB TAFT,
Vice-Chair, Human Resources Committee,
State of Ohio.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF AGING ORGANIZATIONS,

Washington, DC, July 18, 2000.

Hon. JAMES M. JEFFORDS,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), applaud the leadership of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions for developing a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act which will modernize and strengthen the programs and services provided to millions of older Americans. We are especially appreciative of the open and productive process used by Committee staff to obtain input from all interested parties on the future of the Act.

We believe the Committee has crafted a compromise bill, which moves the Act in a number of critical new program directions, while maintaining the integrity of all of the current Titles. We are especially pleased that the bill authorizes a new Family Caregiver Support Program that will provide essential services to thousands of people caring for older individuals in the home.

We urge you to support this bill when the full Committee considers it this week.

Sincerely,

AARP; AFL-CIO Department of Public Policy; Alliance for Aging Research; Alzheimer's Association; American Association for International Aging; American Association of Homes and

Services for the Aging; American Society of Consultant Pharmacists; American Society on Aging; Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Association of Jewish Aging Services; B'nai B'rith International; Gerontological Society of America; Green Thumb; Meals on Wheels Association of America; National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging; National Association of Foster Grandparent Program Directors; National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs; National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors; National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors; National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs; National Association of State Units on Aging; National Caucus and Center on Black Aged; National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare; National Council on the Aging; National Hispanic Council on Aging; National Osteoporosis Foundation; National Senior Service Corps Directors Association; OWL; United Jewish Communities.

JULY 14, 2000.

Hon. JIM JEFFORDS,
*Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions Committee, Dirksen Senate
Office Building, Washington, DC.*

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
*Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions Committee, Dirksen
Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN JEFFORDS AND SENATOR KENNEDY: The undersigned Title V private sector grantees thank you, Senator DeWine and Senator Mikulski for your leadership in constructing an Older Americans Act (OAA) reauthorization bill that all interested parties can support. We believe you have succeeded in that endeavor. While some elements of the July 12 draft bill can be improved, we believe that, on balance, the overall package will put the OAA on solid footing for the next five years.

We are pleased that the Committee has incorporated many improvements recommended by our organizations. With respect to Title V, we particularly appreciate provisions that:

- hold States and private sector grantees harmless at the FY 2000 level of activity;

- ensure that a unit cost adjustment due to an increase in the minimum wage or cost of living increases will have first priority in new Title V appropriations;

- establish clear administrative cost definitions;

- set strong but reasonable placement standards and provide for the establishment of performance standards reflecting the multiple goals of the program; and,

- establish procedures to ensure greater accountability and that introduce constructive competition into the program.

The allocation of the first \$35 million available after unit cost and minimum wage increases remains troubling. We hope, however, that the new performance and accountability measures in the legislation will produce better results.

Regarding Title III, we commend the Committee for addressing a number of issues of concern to most of our organizations and others in the aging network. Among improvements are measures that buttress legal assistance services, restore consumer grievance procedures and strengthen public hearing provisions. It is our understanding that the targeting language in the law has not

been changed in the draft bill. On the other hand, while we welcome enhanced consumer protections related to financial contributions, we remain concerned about the impact on vulnerable individuals of expanded cost sharing by the States. We urge you to narrow the scope of this activity as the legislation moves forward.

All in all, we believe the Committee has met the considerable challenge of updating the Older Americans Act and strengthening the infrastructure needed to serve a rapidly expanding aging population. We look forward to working with you to see this legislation enacted before the end of the 106th Congress.

Sincerely,

HORACE B. DEETS, on behalf of:

AARP, GREEN THUMB,
NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC
CENTER ON AGING—
NAPCA, NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR
HISPANIC ELDERLY—
ANPPM, NATIONAL
CAUCUS AND CENTER ON
BLACK AGED—NCCBA,
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
SENIOR CITIZENS—NCSC,
NATIONAL INDIAN
COUNCIL ON AGING—
NICOA, NATIONAL URBAN
LEAGUE—NUL.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE
SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
*Ranking Minority Member, Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions,
Russell Senate Office Building, Washington,
DC.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of the members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I would like to thank you for your strong efforts to reauthorize the Older Americans Act this Congress. We have reviewed the draft legislation for next week's scheduled mark-up and I am delighted to say that we support its favorable consideration.

This legislation would protect and preserve the many key components of the Older Americans Act, which include the meals programs, in-home service, Title IV research, and jobs programs. It also preserves the vital provisions of Title VII Vulnerable Elder Rights programs, including Legal Services, Elder Abuse Prevention, and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. We are also pleased that your bill would add important new provisions to the Older Americans Act for pension counseling and family caregiver support.

I know this bill is the product of considerable bi-partisan negotiation and effort, and we appreciate your strong leadership in this process. It would be a tremendous 35th birthday present to the Older Americans Act if it were signed into law this year.

This reauthorization effort and any changes it brings will set the stage for aging policy as we enter the new millennium—an era in which meeting the needs of our more isolated seniors within their communities must dominate an increasing share of our national attention. We look forward to the enactment of Older Americans Act legislation before the close of the 106th Congress.

Sincerely,

MARTHA A. MCSTEEN,
President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AREA
AGENCIES ON AGING,
Washington, DC, July 17, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions, U.S. Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: The National Association of Area Agencies of Aging (N4A) commends you and your staff for your leadership on the Older Americans Act Reauthorization. We are extremely pleased that a compromise measure has been developed that resolves a majority of the issues that delayed reauthorization in the past. We are hopeful that the consensus growing around this compromise measure will provide the impetus necessary to see this law reauthorized during the 106th Congress.

For over thirty years, the Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services have improved the quality of life for millions of older adults and their families. Services provided through the OAA include a wide range of home and community based services, such as information and assistance to older adults and their caregivers, home delivered meals, transportation, home care, respite care, adults day care, elder rights and legal assistance, employment assistance and direct funding for tribal elders. The time is long overdue for Congress to reconfirm the federal commitment to the nation's older citizens by reauthorizing the legislation that facilitates the ability of these individuals to remain in the settings where they want and deserve to be, in their homes and communities.

The bill contains many provisions that have long been priorities of N4A. Our membership particularly appreciate the bill's inclusion of a \$125 million authorization for a Family Caregiver Support Program which builds upon existing infrastructures at the local level.

The 655 Area Agencies on Aging and 230 Title VI Native American Indian grantees that N4A represents are anxious to see the Older Americans Act reauthorized this year. We support movement of the Chairman's mark out of committee and to the floor for consideration by the full Senate. We stand ready to assist you in your efforts to make 2000 the year that we realize the long-overdue Older Americans Act Reauthorization.

Sincerely,

JANICE JACKSON,
Executive Director.
BARRY DONENFELD,
President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE UNITS ON AGING,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
*U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: The National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) urges you to support the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's leadership bill to modernize and reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). As you know, the bill will be considered by the Committee on July 19.

Since its enactment in 1965, the OAA has provided the elderly with home and community-based services so they may remain in their homes and live with independence and dignity. Such services include home-delivered and congregate meals, in-home care, respite care, adult day care, and case management. OAA programs and services complement other state and federal programs, such as the Social Services Block Grant, the Medicaid waiver program, and state-funded home and community-based service programs.

The leadership bill will reauthorize the Older Americans Act for 5 years. It maintains the focus and integrity of all the current titles in the Act, including those programs that authorize the long-term care ombudsman program and state legal assistance development.

Most importantly, the bill authorizes a new national family caregiver support program to provide supportive services to family and friends who care for older people in the home. The bill will also revitalize the Title V employment program. In addition, it will give states the option to institute cost sharing for certain services in order to expand services available to those now on waiting lists.

The leadership bill is the product of many months of hard work on the part of committee staff, members, and aging organizations that serve older people. It is a compromise we believe will advance the interests of older people in the new millennium.

If you have any questions, please call Kathy Konka at 202/898-2578.

Sincerely,

DANIEL A. QUIRK, PhD,
Executive Director.

MEALS ON WHEELS ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA,
July 14, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: As President of the Meals On Wheels Association of America (MOWAA), the oldest and largest national organization representing those providing meals to seniors, I am writing to request your support of "The Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000" (the DeWine/Jeffords substitute to S. 1536), proposed legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act during this Congress is a priority for MOWAA, and we are delighted that you and your colleagues have an opportunity to approve a bill that addresses the concerns expressed to you by MOWAA, other service providers and groups serving Older Americans, and the elderly themselves.

When I presented testimony to the Subcommittee last year, I stated that MOWAA was committed to reauthorization, because we believe that the Act is a lifeline for many of this country's seniors. It is the foundation on which a large and vital national, yet distinctly local, system of home and community-based services has been built. In other words, it has worked well. But as we move into this new millennium, and the needs and profiles of those who rely on the Act's services continue to change, parts of the Act need to be modified and fine-tuned to meet the new challenges. MOWAA's testimony outlined some of the changes that this Association believed would be important for the future health and growth of senior meal programs and the elderly whom they serve. We are delighted that our recommendations were carefully examined, and that changes consistent with our suggestions have been included in the draft bill.

Specifically, we are pleased that the DeWine/Jeffords substitute to S. 1526 includes a section relating to "Voluntary Contributions." The proposed language makes clear that meal programs can accept and solicit voluntary contributions. Under the proposed legislation, as we understand it, area agencies on aging will consult with meal providers and others to determine the best method for soliciting and collecting contributions. Contributions would be used for the provision of services. While encouraging client financial participation in a noncoer-

cive way, and by ensuring that no client can be denied a service, the current draft proposal also affords strong protection for clients who are unable or unwilling to pay. MOWAA strongly supports all of these provisions.

This Association has also been on record as supporting giving increased flexibility to States and localities to move nutrition services monies where they are most needed. The legislation accomplishes this by increasing to fifty percent the amount of funds that can be transferred between congregate and home-delivered meals. Additionally, we have also advocated for simplification of the so-called "USDA per meal reimbursement," and the bill achieves that goal by essentially eliminating a reimbursement "rate" and basing allocations on the actual number of meals served in the previous fiscal year. We support both these provisions.

Again, the Meals On Wheels Association of America supports the draft legislation, a reauthorization bill that we believe is forward-looking at the same time that it preserves the fundamental principles on which the Act was created. Committee approval would be a strong and important step forward in the legislative process, and we sincerely hope that you will vote to report a bipartisan bill to the full Senate on July 19. Additionally, we hope all your colleagues in the Senate, and those in the House as well, will recognize the significance of what the Committee has done and commit themselves to continuing to work on a bipartisan basis to enact an Older Americans Act reauthorization in the 106th Congress. Our Nation's seniors deserve no less.

Sincerely,

RICHARD LIPNER,
President.

GENERATIONS UNITED,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: Generations United (GU) supports the draft version of the Older Americans Act that will be marked-up on July 19, 2000. Generations United believes that it is important that the Older Americans Act be re-authorized this year. We applaud the efforts of Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, DeWine, and Mikulski to reach a compromise.

This version includes the National Family Caregiver Support Program, which Generations United has long supported. The Program provides valuable assistance to caregivers, including older adult caregivers and grandparents who are raising grandchildren. The number of grandparents raising their grandchildren has steadily increased in recent years. These caregivers face an emotional and financial toll that is often unforeseen. We believe that they merit support under the Older Americans Act.

Generations United is the national membership organization focused solely on promoting intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. GU represents more than 185 national, state, and local organizations and individuals representing more than 70 million Americans and is the only national organization advocating for the mutual well-being of children, youth, and the elderly. Since 1986, Generations United has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

We urge you to support the draft Older Americans Act that is being presented on Wednesday.

Sincerely,

GENERATIONS UNITED.

THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2000.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I wanted to take this opportunity to commend you for your outstanding leadership that you and Senators Jeffords, DeWine and Mikulski have provided in seeking to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). The Administration strongly supports the OAA bipartisan compromise developed by you and your staff, and urges quick and unanimous Committee approval of this vital legislation.

We are extremely grateful that your compromise includes the National Family Caregiver Support Program. This is a key Administration priority that will help hundreds of thousands of family members who are struggling to care for their older loved ones who are ill or who have disabilities. The National Family Caregiver Support Program has gained the strong support of older persons and their family members all across the country.

We are also especially pleased that your bipartisan compromise includes many other provisions that will strengthen and improve OAA services provided to America's older persons. We support provisions to protect the targeting of service to low-income minority elders, acknowledge culturally appropriate services for Native Americans, maintain the priority for legal services, and allow cost-sharing where appropriate. The bipartisan compromise will also usher the OAA into the 21st century by providing new flexibility throughout the Act, and authorizing a White House Conference on Aging in 2005.

The reauthorization of the Older Americans Act is critically important for millions of older Americans and their families. We are most appreciative of your commitment to the OAA and look forward to working with you to secure final enactment of this legislation in the weeks ahead.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the transmittal of this letter from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

An identical letter is being sent to Senator Jeffords.

Sincerely,

DONNA E. SHALALA.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Washington, DC, July 18, 2000.

Hon. JAMES M. JEFFORDS,
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN JEFFORDS: I wanted to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the Committee in working to address and strengthen vital legislation that enhances services to millions of older Americans. The Department of Labor appreciates the leadership of the Committee in developing this legislation and supports Committee approval of S. 1536, the "Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000."

Among a number of other things, this legislation would reauthorize and amend the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) that is authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act and administered by the Department of Labor. SCSEP provides part-time community service employment to low-income individuals

age 55 and older. This important program provides much needed employment and income to participants, enhances the provision of community services, and promotes economic self-sufficiency by facilitating the re-entry of participants into the labor force and helping them to obtain unsubsidized employment.

The amendments to SCSEP contained in this bill incorporate the key features of the Administration's proposal for reauthorization of the program that were included in S. 1203, sponsored by Senator Mikulski. While retaining the unique and complementary structure of the program under which national nonprofit agencies and organizations as well as States receive grants to operate projects, the bill also contains a number of enhancements to SCSEP.

These enhancements include the establishment of a performance accountability system that would hold each grantee accountable for attaining quality levels of performance with respect to core performance measures. These performance measures include the placement and retention of participants in unsubsidized employment, customer satisfaction of employers and participants, the number of persons served, and the community services provided. The performance measures would be designed to promote the continuous improvement of SCSEP. Failure to attain appropriate levels of performance by a grantee would lead to significant consequences, including the potential loss of part or all of the grant. The Department believes these provisions would strengthen accountability and performance under the program and make a good program even better.

The amendments would also strengthen the linkages of SCSEP with the broader workforce investment system established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). SCSEP is a required partner in the One-Stop delivery system under WIA, and these amendments enhance the connections between SCSEP and WIA through provisions that would allow older individuals easier access to appropriate services under both programs and avoid duplication of services.

In addition, the amendments would improve States' ability to coordinate services to participants by enhancing the planning process relating to SCSEP programs. The bill provides for broad participation of stakeholders in the development of a plan in each State to ensure the equitable distribution of projects within the State. Other enhancements include the incorporation of fiscal accountability provisions similar to those contained in WIA, including definitions of administrative and programmatic costs and the application of uniform cost principles and administrative requirements.

The Department of Labor believes it is essential that the Older Americans Act be reauthorized and enhanced. This legislation advances those objectives while authorizing important improvements to the program. We urge the Committee to approve this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure enactment of this important reauthorization.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the transmittal of this letter from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

ALEXIS M. HERMAN.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I rise with great enthusiasm to support passage of the bipartisan Older Americans Act and its amendments for the year 2000.

This bill enjoys very strong bipartisan support in this institution and in the House and, I believe, among the

American people. Yesterday the House passed this legislation overwhelmingly, 405-2. The Senate companion bill that we are bringing to the attention of our colleagues today already has 72 cosponsors. There is strong bipartisan, bicameral agreement to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. It is built on the strong foundation of S. 1536 and the bipartisan compromises reached by the HELP Committee in that bill.

This legislation also has the strong support of the executive branch. President Bill Clinton's team from HHS was enormously helpful in enabling us to shape not only the reauthorization of the bill as we knew it but help create a framework for the future. The gifted Administrator on Aging, Jeanette Takamura, was tremendously helpful.

This bill is long overdue in its reauthorization. The reauthorization expired in 1995. It became bogged down for almost 5 years in prickly politics, most of which had nothing to do with how we could make sure we were effectively serving the senior population.

This year, as we moved into the 106th Congress, Senator MIKE DEWINE of Ohio and I pledged that we would do everything we could to come up with an excellent framework to meet the needs of the seniors, to not only reauthorize and rubberstamp but to look at it, to be both fiscally prudent but also to be effective with taxpayers' money. He worked very hard in doing that and worked very hard with my staff. I thank him and his staff for their collegial, cordial work on this legislation.

Of course, Senator JEFFORDS has been tremendously helpful. He enabled us to hold our hearings, to move the process forward. I personally thank him. Of course, my champ, the ranking member, Senator KENNEDY, with his very able staff, enabled us to work with the constituency groups, and so on.

So we did all the right process things. Now it is time to move the process to closure. We have had debate. We have had hearings. We have had consultations. We have had consensus. Now it is time we have reauthorization. I hope today we can move expeditiously, entertain any amendments that Members would like to offer, and dispose of them in a timely way. The seniors are looking for it.

When I visit the senior centers in my own community, they say: How are you doing on the Older Americans Act? I say: We are doing fine, but the Older Americans Act is being stalled in a variety of procedural matters.

Let's remove the procedural barriers. Let's also deal with the amendments.

What I like about this legislation is that it keeps our promises to older Americans to retain and strengthen the current Older Americans Act programs, but it also provides new innovations and accountability to improve it. It will ensure that the Older Americans Act continues to meet the day-to-day needs of our country's older Americans and yet the long-range needs of an ever increasing aging population.

One of the highlights of this bill is the creation of a program called the National Family Caregiver Support Program. This recognizes the tremendous aging population, many who are left at home, many of whom rely on the primary caregiver as the American family. The American family is stepping forward to take care of older parents and at the same time being able to raise their own children.

This places tremendous stress on the family in terms of time, energy, and even finances, but, as always, the American family is up to it. The American family is ready to step forward. Often the caregiving is primarily done by women, some who have taken temp jobs, some who have taken flextime jobs, some who are juggling so many others, often to the tune of at least 20 or 40 hours a week either in their own home or going to the home of a parent.

The American family is up to it, but we have to be up to supporting the American family. Government should never be a substitute for the family, but the family should be able to rely on the Government for certain support services to enable them to be the best at caregiving and not wear out.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program will provide very important support services. It will also provide information assistance to millions of Americans who are searching for what are the best resources to help their older parent. Also, it provides for them training, counseling, and even some respite care. Even the best family can't keep at it 24-7, 52 weeks of the year.

It will also help grandparents who care for grandchildren, and, as I said, this program has strong bipartisan support.

Later I will go into the need for caregiving, why it is so important, why we need to support the families.

At the same time, though, while we look for innovation, we also maintain the core programs of the Older Americans Act. I remember when this legislation was passed in 1972, I was so excited about it, working in Baltimore's neighborhoods, that we were actually going to have programs that would come right to the community and right at the neighborhood level.

We knew the seniors needed support services. We knew they were facing loneliness. We knew they were facing poor nutrition. We knew they were often the subject of scams and fraud and a variety of kinds of abuse. As a result of what was done in 1972, we stayed the course. But now, what are the best practices, the highest use of new technologies, and so on, to accomplish this goal?

The program called Meals on Wheels changed the face of America.

Fifty volunteers, often working with nonprofits, were able to get meals into a home in order to keep people independent and at the same time keep a unique partnership between the Federal Government and nonprofits, helping people remain independent. There

were people who were lonely—often widows or men who lost wives who were kind of walking around, hanging out at diners or cafes in certain areas. They needed companionship and maybe a hot meal, and they also needed a sense of purpose where they themselves would volunteer. We use the term congregate meals. What an insipid term because what we really wanted them to do is congregate with other people, to have fun and good meals and even learn some new skills which we are going to bring in with crossing the digital divide. Those nutritional programs kept people alive. My own dear mother, when she came home from an acute care facility, temporarily used that as we pitched in with the rest of the family.

We also maintain a separate and distinct title IV program for research and demonstration because we think we have to try new ideas before we create them and institutionalize them into the legislation. Innovation has always been a unique characteristic. We also talk about a White House conference in 2005. We maintain another poor program—support for transportation services. It is absolutely crucial in our own community and into rural areas. This language also requires older American services to be directed to those who need them the most. However, we acknowledged the unmet need that can exist in rural areas, so we included provisions to improve the delivery of services to older individuals in rural areas.

I congratulate Senator DEWINE, who really ensured a sensitivity to that. I represent rural counties myself. At the same time, we recognize the need to strengthen certain programs and increase accountability. The bill gives greater flexibility to transfer of funds between those congregate and home-delivered meals to the areas of greatest need. It also includes performance measures for States and private sector grantees in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. If these standards are not met and performance is not improved, other entities will get the opportunity to competitively bid for a portion or all of the original entity's grant—whatever the word "entity" means. While I believe that overall the current grantees are performing very well, these provisions will ensure that seniors get the high-quality services they deserve. We ensure accountability for not only the taxpayers' funds but the services being delivered.

So this bill strikes a good balance between recognizing the need for additional resources to support OAA programs and protecting the most vulnerable citizens and their access to services. It also authorizes the seniors to make voluntary contributions for all OAA services. It also allows States to require cost sharing for a limited number of services, such as transportation, respite care, and personal care. A long list of services is exempt from cost sharing, such as Meals on Wheels, information and assistance, and that

very important ombudsman program. It also provides guidance to States and protections to help ensure that seniors are not discouraged from seeking services because of cost sharing.

I note the strong need for increased funding for the Older Americans Act programs. Very few OAA programs have seen increased funding in recent years. Yet there is a growing need for services. I support full funding for OAA and also for the new National Family Caregiver Support Program. Also, the core programs need increases in funding.

So I think this is good legislation. I think it is good authorization. I think it will provide immeasurable guidance to the appropriators for the next 3 years. This morning I say we have good legislation. We can be so proud of the bipartisan, bicameral support. This is what America wants us to do, really—focus on the day-to-day needs of our constituents, look ahead to an aging population, and come up with a fiscally prudent, service-effective framework, and get the job done. All too often in this institution, when all is said and done, more gets said than done. Today, let's stay late and get the job done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I renew Senator DEWINE's earlier request with respect to the Older Americans Act and amend the request to include that at the conclusion or yielding back of the debate time, the bill be set aside with the votes to occur on the amendments and the bill at 5 p.m. today. I further ask consent that the time consumed thus far be deducted from the time agreement accordingly.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I wonder if the Senator from Vermont knows and can give us assurance that that will be the first vote of the day.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I cannot give such assurance.

Mr. REID. We won't object, however. It is quite apparent that we are interested in that being the first vote.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I understand. I have no authority to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. JEFFORDS. Yes.

Mr. REID. The general debate time is gone. The majority and minority used more than their allotted time. We have 4 hours under the control of the Senator from New Hampshire, and we would make it easier for staff and the parties here debating if we would explicitly determine that the time you are going to use will come off Senator GREGG's time. Otherwise, we don't have any time to be debating. Would the Senator from New Hampshire allow the Senator from Vermont to use part of his time?

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2000

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 782) to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to extend authorization of appropriations for programs under the Act, to modernize programs and services for older individuals, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, what is the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is authorized to offer two amendments to the bill with 2 hours evenly divided on each amendment.

Mr. GREGG. I yield such time as he may consume to the Senator from Vermont at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure that the Senate is moving to pass the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000. This year is the 35th anniversary of the Older Americans Program. Since 1965, the act has provided a range of needed social services to our Nation's senior citizens.

It is the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of supportive and nutrition services to older persons, and it has grown and changed to meet our citizens' needs. In 1972, we created the national nutrition program; in 1978, we established a separate title for Native Americans; and in 1987, we authorized programs to prevent elder abuse and neglect.

The act has been reauthorized 12 times, most recently in 1992. Reauthorization legislation was considered in the 104th and 105th Congresses but did not pass due to controversy about a number of proposals. Now, we have the chance to pass this act and provide our elderly with desperately needed help.

The Older Americans Act programs play a vital role in all our communities. Because of the Older Americans Act, millions of nutritious meals are delivered each year to the generation that served our country in World War II. It funds the operations of senior centers and other supportive services to enhance the dignity and independence of the Nation's elders; and it provides part-time employment opportunities to tens of thousands of senior citizens.