

## NANASP Washington Update Teleconference

Bob Blancato  
Meredith Ponder  
January 28, 2016

### Introduction

- Thank you for joining
- Hope you enjoyed the 31 bulletins provided in 2015 and our new newsletter—fall edition out, winter edition coming soon
- Call your attention to our final Bulletin of 2015 which outlined what went on in the year
- Budget a key victory

### 2016

- 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress has convened
- President already given State of the Union address
- Congress already voted again to repeal ACA
- So what can we expect the rest of the year
- Not much

### What to Expect?

- Distinguish between what has to pass
- What might pass
- What will never pass
- And what will be put out there for discussion both in Congress and campaign trail with action deferred until 2017
- And never forgetting that the Administration through executive action and regulations can still impact policy—last year Medicare coverage for advance planning conversations—already this year discharge planning rules and soon to come new rules governing managed care

### What Has to Pass?

- Might only be the budget for the FY that begins on October 1
- Late last year a 2 year budget agreement was passed—a good one preventing any return to sequestration—and allowing for increases for certain programs like elderly nutrition, elder justice, NIH and some others.
- There is additional money that can be added to programs this year too—range of \$15 billion.
- First step in process will be release of the President's budget on or around Feb 9. We look for good things in the budget. No specifics but have good feeling in some areas
- Then Congress takes over: reacts to the President's budget and goes to work on individual appropriation bills

### Appropriations

- In weeks ahead working on our own and again with our colleagues from MOWA and the Academy with the broader LCAO we will be staking out specific positions.
- Safe to say that our priorities for this year will revolve around seeking increases in all nutrition programs that benefit older adults from the OAA to SSBG to SNAP to CSFP. We have no trouble making the case to those in Congress that especially OAA programs prove their value every day

## Other Priorities

- Another priority will be to get increases for the SCSEP program: another value program not only for the part time employment it provides for low income older adults but where they do their community service—on behalf of other older adults
- Older worker left behind in this recovery
- This is still their key program
- Also on priority list will be elder justice

## LCAO Approps Positions for FY17

- “Core” Older Americans Act programs’ funding increased at least 12 percent in FY 2017 or at a minimum fully restored (incl. meals)
- SCSEP funded only at \$434 million—we disapprove of this!
- This was a “chair’s letter” and NANASP did not vote for it

## Must Pass/Might Pass

- In reality whether because there is no need or no ability to—this may be the only must pass bill of the year
- Does not mean other bills might not
- Included among those that might...
- Always have to say the OAA until someone says it’s over
- It is not over: reality is it never ever started as it relates to the House—

## OAA Passage

- Senate bill passed some time back—and one of the leaders was Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders—so if he wins the first contests the odds of OAA passing might get better?
- Choices are pass the Senate bill as is or revert to a simple straight reauth. for a specified number of years. We want to see process move forward but realize if it does not pass by end of this year, process starts all over again in 2017—something which we would be ready to be active in

## Might Pass

- Another bill in the might pass group: the RAISE Family Caregivers ACT
  - development of a strategy that would identify specific actions that government, communities, providers, employers and others can take to recognize and support family caregivers
- The opiate crisis may prompt passage of legislation
- A chronic care comprehensive bill is expected to be introduced—working with those Senators developing it: nutrition as part of it
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures—passed House, Senate working on own version—going to vote “soon”

## Big Ticket Items

- On big ticket items for older adults it will be a year of ideas—proposals but no passage
- Social Security: a campaign issue for sure
- From expanding benefits to raising the age to even privatizing
- Yet important not just as a seniors issue—largest children’s program too

## Medicare

- Big action taken last year by Congress to repeal the SGR—that was a crisis that was averted
- New ideas will emerge in bills introduced and positions taken on campaign trail
- Again run the gamut from increasing benefits to moving to premium support

## LTSS

- Long term services and supports—many proposals out there, some which will become legislation, but too complicated and controversial an issue to pass in a 2016 year
- But again, a campaign issue—especially tied to caregivers
- Idea is to get the OAA into these discussions on LTSS and managed care

## Other Issues

- Issues related to end of life care, workforce, will be debated in Congress and on the campaign trail.
- Income inequality issues and growing concern about higher rates of senior poverty also a topic for the candidates.

## Election Realities

- Lets shift to two realities about this election—
- **Only 284 days to go—no votes have been cast**
- **Polls are not votes—first voting Monday in Iowa and remember this number—\$ 70 million amount spent on political advertising in Iowa alone so far**

## Seniors Decide 2016

- LCAO hosting a presidential candidate forum
- Seniors Decide 2016
- February 17, 1 pm
- Seniorsdecide.org to register for watch party—streamed live—and submit questions for candidates

## Closing

- Congress will be out of D.C. more than in
- Opportunity to do more advocacy at local level, both from standpoint of issues, but also as voters since full House and 1/3 of Senate up for election this year
- Older voter and their issues more important in what will be close election—they have grown from 16 to 23% of voters—and they have trended Republican in recent years