



March 21, 2016

Re: S. 192, the Older Americans Act Reauthorization

Dear Senator/Representative:

We, the undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Task Force on Developmental Disabilities, Autism, and Family Support, are writing to express our support of the House Amendment to Senate Bill 192, a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). CCD is a coalition of national disability-related organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures full equality, self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

While the OAA primarily serves to help older adults maintain their independence, the law also authorizes an important program that serves family caregivers of persons with disabilities – **the National Family Caregiver Support program (NFCSP)**.

The NFCSP was the first federal program to recognize the needs of the nation's family caregivers who provide the vast majority of long-term services and supports. The NFCSP not only funds respite, but individual counseling, support groups, and caregiver training for family caregivers, primarily for those who are caring for the aging population.

Unfortunately, the NFCSP is currently not available to older caregivers of their adult children (age 19 to 59) with disabilities. S. 192 would remedy this problem for the increasing number of Americans who are caregivers of their adult children with disabilities.

This needed improvement would not come a moment too soon. There are over 800,000 caregivers of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are over the age of 60 and this number is projected to grow substantially with the aging of the baby boom generation. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are also living longer due to medical advances. As parents of these individuals age, they will require more support to be able to continue providing care to their adult children and avoiding costly and unwanted institutional placement.

Our organizations hope that the OAA can be promptly reauthorized in a bipartisan manner. More than at any other time, when Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security are being threatened, helping family caregivers to continue providing long-term services and supports is good public policy. We look forward to working with you on the OAA reauthorization to improve services for our nation's caregivers.

Sincerely,

ACCSES
American Dance Therapy Association
American Music Therapy Association

Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism National Committee Family Voices
Easter Seals
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Respite Coalition
Parent to Parent USA
The Arc