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ADMINISTRATION ON AGING

Appropriations, 2007	\$1,383,007,000
Budget estimate, 2008	1,335,146,000
Committee recommendation	1,441,585,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,441,585,000 for aging programs. This amount is \$58,578,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and \$106,439,000 above the administration request.

Supportive Services and Senior Centers

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$350,595,000 for supportive services and senior centers, which is the same as the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and the administration request. This State formula grant program funds a wide range of social services for the elderly, including multipurpose senior centers, adult day care, and ombudsman activities. State agencies on aging award funds to designated area agencies on aging who in turn make awards to local services providers. All individuals age 60 and over are eligible for services, although, by law, priority is given to serving those who are in the greatest economic and social need, with particular attention to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited english proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas. Under the basic law, States have the option to transfer up to 30 percent of funds appropriated between the senior centers program and the nutrition programs, which allows the State to determine where the resources are most needed.

Preventive Health Services

The Committee recommends \$21,400,000 for preventive health services, which is the same as the comparable fiscal year 2007 level. The administration did not request funds for this activity. Funds appropriated for this program are part of the comprehensive and coordinated service systems targeted to those elderly most in need. Preventive health services include nutritional counseling and education, exercise programs, health screening and assessments, and prevention of depression.

Protection of Vulnerable Older Americans

The Committee recommends \$21,156,000 for grants to States for protection of vulnerable older Americans. This is \$1,000,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and \$1,990,000 above the administration request. Within the Committee recommendation, \$16,010,000 is for the ombudsman services program and \$5,146,000 is for the prevention of elder abuse program. Both programs provide formula grants to States to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals. The ombudsman program focuses on the needs of residents of nursing homes and board and care facilities, while elder abuse prevention targets its message to the elderly community at large.

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National Family Caregiver Support Program

The Committee recommends \$156,167,000 for the national family caregiver support program, which is the same as comparable fiscal year 2007 level and \$1,980,000 above the administration request. Funds appropriated for this activity establish a multifaceted support system in each State for family caregivers. All States are expected to implement the following five components into their program: information to caregivers about available services; assistance to caregivers in gaining access to services; caregiver counseling, training and peer support; respite care to enable caregivers to be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities; and limited supplemental services that fill remaining service gaps.

The Committee recognizes the essential role of family caregivers who provide a significant proportion of our Nation's health and long-term care for the chronically ill and aging. While caring for a loved one can be rewarding, it may also put caregivers at risk for negative physical and mental health consequences. The Committee acknowledges the efforts of the administration on Aging [AoA] to provide vital support services for family caregivers through the national family caregiver support program. The Committee encourages increased support of services that may prevent or reduce the health burdens of caregiving, including individual counseling, support groups, respite care, and caregiver training.

Native American Caregiver Support Program

The Committee recommendation includes \$6,428,000 to carry out the native american caregiver support program. This amount is \$187,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and the administration request. The program will assist tribes in providing multifaceted systems of support services for family caregivers and for grandparents or older individuals who are relative caregivers.

Congregate and Home-delivered Nutrition Services

For congregate nutrition services, the Committee recommends an appropriation of \$418,519,000 which is \$19,600,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and \$35,118,000 above the administration request. For home-delivered meals, the Committee recommends \$197,805,000 which is \$9,500,000 above the comparable fiscal year 2007 level and \$16,807,000 above the administration request. These programs address the nutritional needs of older individuals. Projects funded must make home-delivered and congregate meals available at least once a day, 5 days a week, and each meal must meet a minimum of one-third of daily dietary requirements. While States receive separate allotments of funds for congregate and home-delivered nutrition services and support services, they are permitted to transfer up to 40 percent of funds between these programs.

The Committee is aware that proper nutrition is essential to the health and wellness of older Americans. A healthy diet can prevent weakness and frailty, improve resistance to illness and disease, and lead to better management of chronic health problems. All of these in turn lead to greater independence and quality of life for older persons.

