



MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROBERT S. ARACE
MAYOR

**Mayor Robert Arace
Manchester Township
1 Colonial Drive
Manchester NJ, 08753**

December 5, 2024

**The Honorable Congressman Chris Smith
33 Washington Street
Toms River, NJ 08753**

Dear Congressman Smith,

As Mayor of Manchester Township, home to one of New Jersey's largest populations of senior adults, I urge your support for the bipartisan *Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S.4776)*.

The OAA provides critical services—meals, transportation, caregiver support, and health programs—that allow older adults to maintain independence and dignity in their homes and communities. These services are essential to my constituents, especially our many veterans and retirees.

With the Act having expired in September, swift action is needed to avoid disruptions. The proposed updates will ensure agencies can better meet the growing and evolving needs of our older residents and their caregivers.

I respectfully ask for your leadership in advancing this legislation to continue supporting millions of older Americans and their families nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Arace".

**Mayor Robert Arace
Manchester Township, New Jersey**

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Congress passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965 in response to concern by policymakers about a lack of community social services for older persons. The original legislation established authority for grants to states for community planning and social services, research and development projects, and personnel training in the field of aging. The law also established the Administration on Aging (AoA) to administer the newly created grant programs and to serve as the federal focal point on matters concerning older persons.

Although older individuals may receive services under many other federal programs, today the OAA is considered to be a major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to this group and their caregivers. It authorizes a wide array of service programs through a national network of 56 state agencies on aging, 618 area agencies on aging, nearly 20,000 service providers, 281 Tribal organizations, and 1 Native Hawaiian organization representing 400 Tribes. The OAA also includes community service employment for low-income older Americans; training, research, and demonstration activities in the field of aging; and vulnerable elder rights protection activities.

The 2024 Older Americans Act Final Rule

Our world has changed dramatically in the 36 years that have passed since the last substantial update to the regulations for most of ACL's Older Americans Act Programs in 1988. The population of older adults has nearly doubled, and older adults are living longer than ever before. Their expectations for aging are different from those of earlier generations. Increased understanding of the impact of the social determinants of health is reshaping health care, as non-medical services that help people avoid hospitalization and institutional care – like those provided through OAA programs – are increasingly being incorporated into health care service delivery models. In addition, the OAA has been amended by Congress seven times since 1988.

One important thing has not changed, however. Older adults overwhelmingly want to continue to live independently, in the community – and nearly 95 percent of them do, many with the support of ACL’s OAA programs.

In February 2024, ACL released [a final rule to update regulations](#) for implementing Older Americans Act programs. The update aims to better support the national aging network that delivers OAA services and improve program implementation, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the nation's growing population of older adults can continue to receive the services and supports they need to live – and thrive – in their own homes and communities.

We are asking for everyone to support the bipartisan Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S.4776), which is crucial for the well-being of millions of older adults and their caregivers across the United States.

The OAA provides essential services such as meals, transportation, caregiver support, and health promotion programs that enable older Americans to maintain their independence and dignity. With the Act having expired in September, it's critical that we act swiftly to ensure these vital services continue uninterrupted.

Your support can make a significant difference in the lives of our seniors and their caregivers. Act now by using the sample letter below to ensure that these critical services continue for those who need them most.

Dear [Senator NAME]:

On behalf of [AGENCY NAME] in [AGENCY LOCATION AND STATE], we are writing to urge you to support advancing the bipartisan Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S.4776), which we expect to be considered by the Senate in early December.

The bipartisan Senate bill, amended with the House's input, includes critical updates to the law that help agencies like ours better serve older adults and their family caregivers. Because the Act expired in September, it's imperative that Congress act quickly this year to ensure the continued health and well-being of the 11 million older adults and family caregivers who receive OAA services in communities across the country.

Sincerely,

[NAME, affiliation, address, etc.]

Thank you,

CarrieAnn Rosetto
Assistant Administrative Analyst
Ocean County Office of Senior Services
732-929-2181