



Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
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Presented by:

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Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on H.B. 166.

We appreciate the Senate's thoughtful approach to improving aging outcomes for older Ohioans.

We are grateful for the inclusion of language that will bring parity to the level of investment for older Ohioans and Ohioans with disabilities who are served in their homes and communities as with those served in nursing facilities with an alignment of rate increases starting in fiscal year 2022.

We also applaud both the House and Senate for recognizing the need for increased investment in PASSPORT personal care aide rates and assisted living waiver rates; this is another good step towards parity.

Other areas of improvement by the House and Senate that we support are increased investment in adult protective services, the creation of a statewide kinship navigator program, increased investment in the state long term care ombudsman program, and increased rates for certain home-delivered meals.

We were heartened by expressions of support by House and Senate members for the Senior Community Services program and the need for increased investment. Unfortunately, this has not yet translated into an actual increase in the line item above what is being designated by the ODA director for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program expansion.

The Senior Community Services program has suffered cuts of over 50% in the last several years while, in contrast, Ohio's aging population continues to grow. Older Ohioans currently have needs that are going unmet. In some regions there are waiting lists for home delivered meals. Transportation programs are struggling to be able to serve those who need it most. Personal care, congregate meals, housing assistance, and many other services are in great demand. Social isolation and elder abuse, neglect and exploitation are all potential consequences, among others, of these needs going unmet.

We must ensure adequate funding and system resources are dedicated to the full spectrum of supports to enable us all to live healthy, engaged and secure lives as we age in our homes and communities.

We urge your support to restore the Senior Community Services line item (ALI 490-411) to the pre-recession level of \$10 million. Restoration to this level amounts to about an additional \$1.8 million per year for the Area Agencies on Aging to distribute in their regions using local input and decisions about how to best meet the needs of older people in their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.