

Betty Mulholland  
Testimony for AoA OAA Reauthorization  
California Senior Legislature Sr Senator Member  
Representing Alameda County  
March 3, 2010  
San Francisco, California

Good afternoon, I want to take this opportunity to thank Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary on Aging, The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, and The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging for allowing me to learn about this meeting. I was given a time to speak and I decided what will be will be and here I am.

The passage of the Older Americans Act has allowed me and my fellow seniors to travel to Senior Centers and Doctors Appointments because the cost of transportation for seniors was affordable. I knew that if I didn't have enough for a meal at anytime during the month I could go to the Senior Center in my area to eat. I knew that my medical needs would be taken care of properly because I was covered under Medicare, Medical and Part D the Prescription Drug Program, and I didn't have to pay exorbitant amounts for the 22 different medicines I must take to stay alive. All of these things I and all the Seniors of today and in the future will be able to do with dignity if we reauthorize the older Americans Act.

Through programs and support under the Older Americans Act programs. I, like millions of other seniors are not only able to live independently but also to remain active and contribute to the enhancement of our community. Since my retirement, I have been actively involved in various organizations. I was a Delegate to the White House Conference on Aging in 2005 and participated in follow-up programs with the State of California Commission on Aging and was a Commissioner with the Alameda County Commission on Aging, I was also an Alternate to the White House Conference in 1995 and thru that program became an activist and Volunteer for the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. Older Americans Act programs and services can empower senior citizens and provide information and education that enable them to become better advocates for themselves and their families. I am a Senior Senator, representing Alameda County with the State of California.

We not only need to have the older Americans Act reauthorized but we need to increase the funding for all of the programs covered under the Act. The programs established should be funded at rates based on the mushrooming numbers of seniors which will increase to approximately 77 million by the year 2030. I probably won't be around the,

but the amount of money funded to this program has not increased enough to insure that the senior population is ;provided adequate services under the Older Americans Act. Because of the cutbacks in funding by State and Federal government programs, seniors living on their own could have no place to go, nothing to do and could end up homeless or institutionalized.

What I don't understand is why the cost of living for seniors and everybody else is going up; why the availability of public transit is vanishing; the availability for seniors to travel from home to the doctors or grocery store is no longer a simple task; Transit routes that were in abundance no longer exist; or the cost is beyond most seniors reach. The public bus routes have been cut almost to the bone, so many have disappeared so that unless you have family to help you are locked into your neighborhood.

The cost of insurance to visit the doctor or purchase prescription drugs under the Part "D" program are increasing to the point that seniors on fixed income will not be able o afford to see their doctors or pay for much needed medicines.

All the programs established thru the Older Americans Act are no longer being funded at a level which allows them to provide assistance to all in need of medical care, housing, safe environments, and counseling assistance for major and problems that may occur.

In conclusion I ask that Congress reauthorize and invest in the Older Americans Act programs in 2011 and increase funding for:

Title III-D Nutrition which enables seniors to share a meal as well as comradery and friendship, provide nutrition education, health screening, and counseling at senior centers. Provides daily delivery of hot meals to homebound seniors.

Title III-E National family caregivers support program 2000 amendment to provide assistance to people who provide the primary care for spouses, parents, and older relatives and friends.

Title-V Community Services Senior Opportunity Act 1973 amendments which included a new Title V, creating the Community Service employment grant programs for low-income persons age 55 and older, administered by the Department of Labor.

Title VII Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to cover nursing homes while 1981 amendment expanded coverage to Board and Care Homes. Programs for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect

and Exploitation Assistance for the development of State Legal Services programs.

Title III Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services, which educates and enables older persons to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Title IV Activities for Health Independence and Longevity and provides training for personnel in the field of aging.

Title VI Grants for Native Americans, Grants Caregivers Support Program directly to Tribal and Native American Organizations for Nutrition and Supportive Services, and provides grants for the Native American Family Caregivers Support Program.

Again, Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the Older Americans Act Program and Services.