

Urging Funding for Sections 202 and 417 of the Reauthorized Older Americans Act

- Our aging population presents a potentially powerful resource opportunity. All 77 million members of the Baby Boomer generation will have passed their 60th birthdays by 2025. If strategically mobilized, older adults can fill gaps in areas such as education, health care, and family support. The net result would be billions of tax dollars saved through wise forethought and planning.
- New provisions added to the Older Americans Act (OAA), sections 202 and 417 provide significant opportunities to take advantage of the resources older volunteers can give to their communities.
- We urge the members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, particularly the subcommittees on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies to propose that these programs receive \$9.9 million in funding for FY 2008 – \$4 million for programs under section 202 and \$5.9 million for programs under section 417.
- The proposed section 202 grants would provide funding to:
 - increase opportunities for older adults to participate in local and national service programs, for example by mentoring in schools;
 - develop a blueprint on how to best to tap older adults as a new source of social capital to address critical needs; and
 - foster the growth of promising practices and capacity building initiatives focused on developing older adults as community assets for all.
- The proposed section 417 grants would provide funding to:
 - provide help and advice to grandparents and other older relatives raising children;
 - involve older volunteers who support families with special needs children; and
 - support both innovative and proven multigenerational and civic engagement programs.
- While highly significant, the new changes to the OAA are not reflected in the Administration on Aging's 2008 – 2012 Strategic Plan. Appropriators should urge the AoA to revise its plan in order to affirm its responsibility for promoting and funding civic engagement opportunities for older adults.
- Funding these new provisions of the reauthorized Older Americans Act opens the door to creating more and stronger civic engagement opportunities for many aging adults, especially the Baby Boomer generation, who are beginning a new life stage – one to two decades after full-time work that they can use for the greater good. Providing such opportunities will benefit both the aging adults and their communities.