

September 17, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chair
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici, Chair
The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services
House Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Letter of Support for H.R. 4334 Dignity in Aging Act

Dear Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, Chair Bonamici and Ranking Member Comer:

The Gerontological Society of America congratulates you on crafting a bipartisan reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). We have greatly appreciated being a part of the discussions on how the OAA could be strengthened and revitalized to support the needs of the growing population of older adults. We are extremely impressed with the time and thoughtful consideration that you and your staff committed to this process thus far.

We believe that H.R. 4334, the Dignity in Aging Act, cosponsored by Chair Bonamici (D-OR), Ranking Member Comer (R-KY), and Representatives Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Susie Lee (D-NV), Susan Wild (D-PA) and Dusty Johnson (R-SD), sends a strong message regarding the importance of providing community-based services to improve the quality of life of older adults while enabling them to remain in their homes and communities, potentially avoiding unnecessary and costly hospital and nursing home admissions.

Let me mention a few of the many important areas that the legislation addresses. We are extremely pleased that you have included provisions that we helped develop to revitalize the OAA's research, demonstration, and program evaluation capabilities. We also have been strong supporters of your focus on addressing social isolation and loneliness. Likewise, given the OAA goals of prevention and mitigation of the effects of chronic disease, we applaud the inclusion of immunization status and recognition of the importance of vaccine-preventable disease. Finally, your provisions addressing the needs of family caregivers are extremely timely and important. In all these areas we are proud to have

GSA members who have made contributions to the field and this bill that will lead to empowering older adults.

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. The principal mission of the Society — and its 5,500+ members — is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision-makers, and the general public. GSA's structure also includes a policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society, and an educational unit, the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education.

Please contact me at jappleby@geron.org, Patricia D'Antonio, GSA Vice President, Professional Affairs at pdantonio@geron.org, or Brian Lindberg, GSA Public Policy Advisory at brian@consumers.org, if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James C. Appleby".

James C. Appleby, BSPHarm, MPH, ScD (Hon)
Chief Executive Officer