

goal on behalf of one of our Nation's greatest resources—our older Americans.

Before closing, I want to thank certain staff of the committee for their hard work and long hours in making this reauthorization a reality. I would especially like to thank the following staff members: Katherine McGuire, Ilyse Schuman, Greg Dean, Lindsay Morris, Karla Carpenter, Kori Forster, Lauren Fuller, Michelle Dirst, Brittany Moore and Will Green. Also, I would like to thank the many others who have supported this effort, including Carol O'Shaughnessy and Richard Rimkunas of the Congressional Research Service, and most notably the work of Liz King in the Senate's Office of Legislative Counsel in supporting the drafting of this legislation. Also, I thank the work of the many staff on the other side of the aisle for their contributions toward passage of the bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation in light of the growing needs of our population to ensure that the services they need in the coming years are available to them.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2006

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I commend Chairman ENZI, Senator DEWINE, Senator MIKULSKI, Chairman McKEON, Representative TIBERI, Representative MILLER, and Representative HINOJOSA for their bipartisan leadership in reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. It's been a lifeline for senior citizens across the country for 40 years, and all of us want it to continue to fulfill its important mission in the years ahead.

Like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the Older Americans Act is part of our commitment to care for the Nation's seniors in their golden years.

Last year, 1,200 bi-partisan delegates were chosen by the Governors of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Territories to attend the first White House Conference on Aging since 1985. Over the years these conferences have served as catalysts for change, and this conference was no different. The delegates called for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act as their No. 1 priority and I'm pleased that Congress has answered their call.

As we all know, the baby boomer generation is retiring. One in nine Americans are over age 65 today, but by the year 2030, the number will be one in five.

Our authorization bill is designed to take some of the necessary steps to put the infrastructure in place to provide services that will be needed by those retirees. It requires State and local agencies to acknowledge the dramatically changing demographics and to plan ahead. I hope Congress will continue to build on these efforts in coming years and provide increased funds for the important programs in this Act.

The Conference on Aging also focused on another important theme—the importance of civic engagement and community service by senior citizens.

Members of the new generation of older Americans obviously want to continue to be engaged in their communities after they retire, and it would make no sense for our society not to draw on their experience and knowledge in constructive ways.

The Older Americans Act already provides opportunities for employment of older Americans through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. According to a study by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, the number of older persons aged 55 to 74 with income below 125 percent of poverty will increase from 6 million in 2005 to over 8 million in 2015. Our bill strengthens job training for seniors to involve them in the communities they love, and which also love them. Last year, the program supported 61,000 jobs and served 92,000 people.

Older Americans today provide 45 million hours of valuable service to their communities, particularly in senior centers, public libraries, and nutrition programs.

The bill is also intended to encourage good nutrition, healthy living, and disease prevention among seniors. The Meals on Wheels program, enacted in the 1970's, is one of its greatest successes, and Massachusetts has been in the forefront of efforts to provide community-based nutrition services to the elderly. The Massachusetts program coordinates twenty-eight nutrition projects throughout the State to deal with poor nutrition and social isolation of seniors. Our bill will expand the ability of programs such as Meals on Wheels to reach all older individuals who need better nutrition.

Today it's estimated that 47 percent of the elderly eligible for Supplemental Security Income, 70 percent of seniors eligible for food stamps, 67 percent of people eligible for Qualified Medicare Beneficiary protections, and 87 percent of those eligible for Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary protections are not participating in these programs. Surely, we can do a better job of outreach to bring these programs to the attention of those who need them. Our bill addresses the need for better outreach to seniors about the healthcare, mental health services, and long-term care benefits available to them.

I also commend all of the staff members who have worked so hard to bring this bill to final passage today, especially Ellen-Marie Whelan and Keysha Brooks-Coley in Senator MIKULSKI's office, Lauren Fuller and Kori Forster in Senator Enzi's office, and Lindsay Morris and Karla Carpenter in Senator DEWINE's office.

This bill will mean better health and more fulfilling lives for both seniors

and their communities in the years ahead, and I strongly support its passage.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise in support of legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act.

I strongly support this bill and want to acknowledge the hard work of the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension, HELP, Committee, Senator MIKE ENZI, and the committee's ranking minority member, Senator TED KENNEDY.

In addition, I want to thank Senator MIKE DEWINE, the chairman of the Retirement Security and Aging Subcommittee and its ranking minority member, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. All four of my colleagues and their wonderful staffs, Lauren Fuller, Kori Forster, Lindsay Morris, Kara Marchione, Ellen-Marie Whelan, and Keysha Brooks-Coley did a tremendous job in producing a good bill that will make a difference in the lives of older Americans across the nation.

Yesterday, this legislation passed the House of Representatives unanimously and it is my hope that the Senate will follow suit.

This legislation improves the functions of the Administration on Aging, provides grants for State and community programs on aging, and creates training and research programs to assist seniors in maintaining their independence. In addition, the conference report includes job training for seniors through the community service employment program and grants for supportive and nutrition programs for older Native Americans.

There are two provisions of this measure that I would like to highlight.

First, the conference report includes provisions from legislation that I introduced earlier this Congress with my colleague, Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN of Arkansas, S. 2010, the Elder Justice Act.

More specifically, this legislation includes a provision which authorizes the Assistant Secretary on Aging to designate an individual to be responsible for elder abuse and prevention services, and to coordinate Federal elder justice activities. This includes developing a long-term plan for the creation and implementation of a coordinated, multidisciplinary elder justice system.

I am so proud to have provisions from the Elder Justice Act included in this legislation. With over 77 million baby boomers retiring in the next three decades, we have no choice but to acknowledge something must be done to combat elder abuse. Passage of this bill is an important step in the right direction.

I also am pleased that this legislation includes a sense of the Congress recognizing the contribution of nutrition to the health of older Americans. This sense of the Congress states that while diet is the preferred source of nutrition, evidence suggests that the use

of a single daily multivitamin-mineral supplement may be an effective way to address nutritional gaps that exist among the elderly population, especially the poor. I strongly believe that by encouraging seniors to take daily multivitamin-mineral supplements, we are only helping them to live longer, healthier lives and I am hopeful that senior meals programs will decide to provide supplements to those who participate.

There is a long history of evidence indicating that multivitamins and minerals can maintain and improve health and are safe. While I wish this provision had been more than a sense of the Congress, I appreciate the work of the conferees to highlight the necessity of good nutrition and supplementation.

Once again, I want to congratulate my colleagues on a job well done. Older Americans across the country appreciate your efforts.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. I commend Chairman ENZI and Ranking Member KENNEDY of the Committee on Health, Labor, and Pensions for their hard work in putting this bill together and working through the differences with the House prior to today's floor action so that this important legislation can go straight to the President's desk and be signed into law.

There are many important provisions aimed at improving the lives of our senior citizens contained in the Older Americans Act. Today, however, there is one part of the bill to which I want to draw particular attention: Section 203 of the act establishes an Interagency Coordinating Committee that will help the Federal Government work with its partners to meet the growing housing, health care, transportation, and related needs of senior citizens around the country. The Interagency Coordinating Committee will work to better coordinate Federal agencies so that seniors and their families can access the programs and services necessary to allow them to age in place or find suitable housing alternatives. This section draws heavily from S. 705, the Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors Act, which I introduced in April 2005. S. 705 was passed by the Senate unanimously on November 15, 2005.

As I said when the legislation first passed, the challenges that confront us as our population ages are growing more urgent. Data from the 2000 census show that the U.S. population over 65 years of age was 34.7 million. This number is expected to grow to over 50 million by 2020. It is projected that by 2030 nearly 20 percent of our population will be over 65; that is, almost one American in every five will be elderly.

As our senior population continues to increase, so will the demand for afford-

able housing and service options. This is a matter of concern not only for those who will need the services but for families—children along with spouses. It concerns communities all around the country, as productive and responsible citizens grow older and need help. It is a matter of deep concern for us all because it will affect the well-being of our entire society.

Many of us know, both from academic studies and our own experience with elderly parents or friends, that helping a senior citizen to remain in her home or in her community for as long as possible promotes a better quality of life. In order to help seniors age in place or find suitable alternative housing arrangements, services must be linked with that housing. Seniors must be able to access needed health supports, transportation, meal and chore services, and assistance with daily tasks in or close to their homes. Without needed supports, seniors and their families face difficult and even daunting decisions.

The Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility Needs for Seniors, known as the Seniors Commission, established by Congress in 1999, found that too often, seniors face premature institutionalization because housing and services are not linked. This results in more expensive care for the person, increased social isolation, and a lower quality of life. According to the Commission's report, "the very heart" of its work "is the recognition that the housing and service needs of seniors traditionally have been addressed in different 'worlds' that often fail to recognize or communicate with each other." The Commission concluded that: "the most striking characteristic of seniors' housing and health care in this country is the disconnection of one field from another." The creation of the Interagency Coordinating Committee will ensure that this important conversation gets started.

If left unattended, the problem of lack of coordination will increasingly undermine all of our efforts to assure that Americans have access to the services they need as they age. The Interagency Coordinating Committee established by this legislation will increase communication and coordination among Federal agencies while reducing duplication. The committee will also serve as a permanent national platform to address the needs and issues of our aging population.

The Interagency Coordinating Committee will further help to improve collaboration and coordination among the Federal agencies and our State and local partners to ensure that seniors are better able to access housing and services. This committee will work to find new ways to link housing programs and needed supportive services to increase their efficiency, to make

them more accessible, and to strengthen their capacity.

The decisions that our seniors and their families must make are difficult enough. They should not be made more painful and burdensome by having to negotiate a confusing maze of programs and services and a multiplicity of administrative procedures. I am hopeful that the Coordinating Committee will be able to focus attention on this problem and cut through the barriers that Americans face to utilizing the programs we have provided for them.

The two members of the Interagency Coordinating Committee specifically named in the legislation are the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, HHS, and Housing and Urban Development, HUD. These two Cabinet members are crucial to achieving the ultimate goal of the committee—to make affordable housing and needed supportive services, which are often health-related services, easier for seniors to access together. The legislation also names many other high-ranking officers from agencies that oversee programs of significant importance to the lives of older Americans as potential members of Coordinating Committee. I urge the President, after signing this legislation, to quickly name the rest of the committee so that it can begin to create the kind of seamless web of housing, health, transportation, and other services for our seniors that this legislation envisions.

In closing, I want to thank Chairman ENZI and Ranking Member KENNEDY for their strong support for including the idea of the Interagency Coordinating Committee. Katherine McGuire, Greg Dean, and Lauren Fuller from the HELP Committee were absolutely vital in working with Jonathan Miller of my office and the House committee to make sure this important provision was included in the final legislation.

Likewise, my longtime colleague and friend, Senator MIKULSKI, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging, and Keysha Brooks-Coley from her subcommittee staff, have been strongly supportive of this provision and have been tireless in their advocacy on its behalf. I greatly appreciate their efforts. As I did when S. 705 first passed, I want to express my thanks to Chairman SHELBY for moving S. 705 through the Committee and the Senate floor expeditiously and the Banking Committee staff who helped in achieving this goal, especially Kathy Casey, the former staff director, Mark Calabria, and Tewana Wilkerson.

Finally, I want to thank two former members of my staff, Jennifer Fogel-Bublick and Sarah Garrett, who, at the staff level, were principally responsible for crafting the original legislation and who helped to guide it through this body last year. This accomplishment is

very much due to their hard work over the last several years.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight an agreement reached by my colleagues, Senator MIKE ENZI and Senator RICHARD BURR, in regard to Federal funding formulas.

Over the past year and a half the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, of which I am a member, has been working on the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. Part of this work included changes to the funding formula for the programs contained within the act. I was actively involved in this work with Chairman ENZI and Senator BURR, as I believe that the formula is unfair and inequitable to states with a growing elderly population.

While we were able to make some changes to the funding formula for the Older Americans Act, it is far from adequate. The formula continues to provide high-growth states with less than their fair share of funding.

Chairman ENZI has agreed to hold hearings during the 110th Congress to review federal funding formulas.

Senator BURR and I agree that Federal money should follow people. Current Federal funding formulas often ignore this and penalize those living in fast-growing States.

According to USA Today, the state of Nevada is projected to see a one hundred and fourteen percent increase in our population—the highest rate of growth in the country. Nevada welcomes our new-comers with open arms, as they have recognized the quality of life the state of Nevada has to offer. I am proud that so many Americans have chosen to call Nevada home.

I was sent to Washington, DC, promising that I would do more to bring Nevadans hard earned dollars back to the State. Nevadans are happy to pay their fair share of taxes to the Federal Government, but also expect a fair share to return to the State. Despite my success in changing several funding formulas, Nevada continues to rank at the bottom of the list in terms of Federal dollars returning to the State.

Much of this is because current Federal funding formulas contain provisions that require outdated population data, and others mandate the use of hold harmless provisions. Both of these provisions work against those who need the assistance these funds provide. These provisions punish those who have chosen to move to a different State particularly fast-growing States.

I have worked to bring some equity and fairness to the title I education funding formula, which has brought an additional \$43 million to the State of Nevada. I have also worked to bring some fairness to the Perkins Career and Technical Education program and other important programs, but much work remains to be done.

I am anxious for these hearings to begin so we can truly shed some light

on these formulas and the unfair provisions used to allocate Federal dollars. Federal money ought to follow those individuals it is designed to assist. It should not be held hostage to politics.

It is my hope that these hearings will lay the groundwork for work on other federal funding formulas, particularly those used to allocate funding for education and health care programs. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on this extraordinarily important issue in the very near future.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of Senate passage of the bipartisan, bicameral Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006, H.R. 6197. This bill passed the House unanimously yesterday and is a bipartisan, bicameral agreement to reauthorize this important act until 2011.

H.R. 6197 retains and strengthens current programs, as well as establishes new innovative programs. This bipartisan bill also honors the agreement that I made with Senators ENZI, DEWINE, and KENNEDY to members of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to address the current funding formula for title III OAA dollars before moving the bill to the senate floor. The bill includes a compromise that addresses States that have both increasing and decreasing populations. Updating the "hold harmless" to the fiscal year 2006 funding level helps States with steady populations, while phasing out the guaranteed growth provision over 5 years helps States with increasing aging populations.

This past December, the congressionally mandated White House Conference on Aging convened 1,200 bipartisan delegates from all 50 States to discuss issues that affect the lives of older individuals across the country. The No. 1 resolution adopted at the conference was reauthorization of the OAA this year. We have heeded their call and are pleased that H.R. 6197 has the strong support of the aging community.

There are three principles that I used to guide this reauthorization process. First, to continue to improve the core services of this act to meet the vital needs of America's seniors. We need a national program with national standards that ensure consistency but allow for sufficient flexibility and creativity. Second, to modernize the act, to meet the changing needs of America's senior population, including the growing number of seniors over 85. We must be ready for the impending senior boom and look for ways to help seniors live more independent and active lives. And finally, to ensure these critical national, State, and local programs have the resources they need to get the job done.

This bill keeps our promise to older Americans to retain and strengthen current OAA programs, as well as provide new innovative programs to fur-

ther improve the act. It will ensure that the OAA continues to meet the day-to-day needs of our country's older Americans and the long-range needs of our aging population.

The reauthorization bill maintains tried and true programs, including information and referral services that are the backbone of OAA programs, providing seniors and their family members information about supportive services, nutrition programs like Meals on Wheels that provide meals to 2.75 million people every year, and transportation services which are critically important to seniors in our rural areas. At the same time, we recognize the need to strengthen certain programs in the act and establish new innovative initiatives that are fiscally responsible.

The bill strengthens the National Family Caregiver Support Program by providing respite services to older adults who care for their children who are disabled and lowering the age eligibility of grandparents caring for a child from 60 to 55. The bill also extends caregiver services to individuals with Alzheimer's disease of any age to address the increasing number of people who are being diagnosed with Alzheimer's at an earlier age and increases the authorization for the program to meet the growing needs of family caregivers.

The bill strengthens aging and disability resource centers, expanding the important role resource centers across the country provide. These centers are visible, trusted sources of information on long-term care options and health insurance and provide seniors and their family members with important information on benefits including the Medicare prescription drug program.

The bill strengthens the title V Senior Community Service Employment Program by maintaining the strong community service aspect of the program, an integral component since the beginning. This program helps seniors find jobs at Meals on Wheels programs, senior centers, and public libraries.

H.R. 6197 authorizes new innovative programs including a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community—NORC—Aging in Place Program that will support and enhance the ability of seniors to remain in their homes and communities by providing seniors necessary supporting services including transportation, social work services, and health programs. The new grant program builds on the success of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities Programs that have developed at the local level and have a proven record of success.

A Civic Engagement Demonstration Program is authorized that encourages older adults to become actively involved in their communities. The program will capitalize on the talent and experience of older adults to meet critical needs in our communities. The bill

also creates an elder abuse program that will support State and a community effort against elder abuse by conducting research related to elder abuse and neglect and creates a nationally coordinated system to collect data about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The bill also establishes an Inter-agency Coordination Committee based on S. 705, Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors Act of 2005, introduced by the senior Senator from Maryland, Mr. SARBANES. The inter-agency committee will address the housing and social service needs of seniors and enhance working relationships and coordination among Federal entities including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation.

This bill addresses the issue of emergency preparedness for seniors by requiring States and Area Agencies on Aging to coordinate, develop plans, and establish guidelines for addressing the senior population during disasters/emergencies. During Hurricane Katrina and Rita, we all saw that many times the people who were left behind were the elderly. We must plan accordingly for seniors and use the successful senior network that exists in our country to make sure that they are not forgotten.

I thank Senator DEWINE, chairman of the Retirement Security and Aging Subcommittee, for his sincere dedication to reauthorizing the OAA this year and his willingness to work in a bipartisan manner to accomplish this. This is our second time reauthorizing this act together, and we produced a bipartisan bill once again. I also thank Senator ENZI for his strong leadership in moving this bill through the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and all the way up to this point. Thank you also to Senator KENNEDY for his leadership and his tireless advocacy for OAA programs and the people it serves.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the Older Americans Act amendments of 2006. As the Federal Government's chief program for the provision of a variety of social services for America's older citizens, the Older Americans Act, OAA, has and will continue to be a program of critical importance, especially for the aging baby boomer population.

The bill before us includes a number of important provisions that seek to strengthen and improve health and nutrition programs, educational and volunteer services, and home and community support systems for our Nation's older citizens. I commend my colleagues in Congress for these needed improvements and enhancements to the OAA, and I support final passage of this bill.

While I am also pleased by the modifications made to the funding formula

included in title III of the act that will result in increased funding for North Carolina and other high-growth States, I am disappointed that the final funding formula included in the act does not completely eradicate funding inequities. For far too long, my home State of North Carolina and a number of other high-growth States have consistently been underfunded under the OAA. Prior to the 2000 reauthorization of the OAA, the General Accountability Office, GAO, both in 1994 and 2000, documented that the allocation method used by the Administration on Aging, AOA, to distribute title III funding resulted in inequitable funding across States and adversely affected States with rapidly growing older populations such as North Carolina. Under AOA's allocation procedures, States with above-average growth were consistently underfunded, while States with below-average growth were consistently overfunded. In fiscal year 2000 alone, GAO found that AOA's allotment method resulted in North Carolina being underfunded by \$2.1 million.

Although Congress attempted during the 2000 reauthorization of the OAA to ensure that the allocation methods used to distribute funds were consistent with statute, a provision was added to the formula, referred to as a guaranteed growth factor, which had the unfortunate effect of compounding the disparities between high- and low-growth States. Under the formula included in the Act before us, this guaranteed growth factor is to be phased out in 5 years. I appreciate the inclusion of this phase out. However, I strongly believe that 5 years is too long a time to eliminate a funding provision that serves only to underfund high-growth States and over-fund low-growth States.

As we all know, older Americans are a rapidly growing and ever important group of our population. My home State of North Carolina has and will continue to experience unprecedented growth in all segments of our populations in the coming years. While the Nation's total population is expected to grow 29 percent by 2030, North Carolina's total population is expected to increase 51.9 percent by 2030, making North Carolina the seventh most populous by 2030 and the seventh fastest growing state.

The State of North Carolina welcomes this growth, which we are experiencing among all age segments of our population, and we are pleased that so many are choosing to make North Carolina their home. Nevertheless, to best meet the needs of our residents, it is imperative that funds provided by Federal programs such as the OAA reach the individuals they are intended to serve. As we all know, funding formulas are complicated. Nevertheless, it is critical that this and other formula issues be resolved once and for all and

not once again put off for another day or other reauthorizations years down the road. If the goal of the OAA is to provide essential Federal programs and services for older Americans, then such Federal funds must be directed to States in which older Americans are living.

For this reason, I am pleased that Chairman ENZI has committed to me to hold hearings during the coming Congress to review all formulas for Federal programs under the jurisdiction of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and to examine how those formulas are developed to determine the fair and equitable distribution of funds. I also appreciate Chairman ENZI's commitment to address the next reauthorization of the OAA within 3 years after we pass this bill before us so that we can more quickly examine and remediate the current funding inequities. I look forward to working with Chairman ENZI and my other colleagues to ensure that Federal funds follow the people and their needs.

Ms. STABENOW. I have heard from many seniors, the Center for Social Gerontology in Ann Arbor, and Michigan's Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers about the need for reauthorizing the Older Americans Act, which was last reauthorized in 2000. While the reauthorization of the OAA is a positive step for America's seniors, funding for Federal seniors services has failed to keep pace with inflation and an aging population.

I am also pleased that the OAA reauthorization will contain the core elements of S. 409, the Federal Youth Coordination Act, which I cosponsored with Senator NORM COLEMAN. I was also pleased to work with Congressman TOM OSBOURNE on pushing this legislation forward. I thank Chairman ENZI and Senators KENNEDY and MIKULSKI and their staff for including this important piece of legislation in the OAA reauthorization.

In 2003, the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth report identified numerous programs in 12 different Federal agencies that serve or relate to disadvantaged youth. But the task force could not determine precisely how much funding directly impact our young people because there is no uniform, focused Federal youth policy. The task force recommended the establishment of a coordinating body to facilitate the evaluation, coordination, and improvement of Federal programs serving youth.

In response, our legislation creates a 2-year coordinated council to evaluate, coordinate, and improve Federal youth programs. Membership on the council includes 12 Federal agency officials, representatives of youth-serving nonprofits and faith-based organizations, and the youth who actually participate in these important programs.

The purpose of our bill is not to cut programs but to look at ways we can

better serve our young people. Our children, especially those most at risk, should not be lost in a Federal bureaucracy. We must ensure that our taxpayers' investment produces a strong return on our Nation's investment in our children. America's youth deserve high-quality, effective and meaningful youth development programs that achieve the greatest possible impact.

I urge the President to convene a council that will take its mission seriously and includes members with strong backgrounds in children's services. Most importantly, the council ought to include young people, especially those positively impacted by federally funded programs. At a January briefing I sponsored with Senators COLEMAN and DEWINE, one of the most powerful stories we heard from Terry Harrak, a former foster youth once caught in the middle of the maze of services. She called on the Senate to pass the Coleman-Stabenow bill and for Congress to not cut the number of programs but to improve how they work together.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their support for serving two of our most vulnerable populations, our seniors and our children. Additionally, I thank the many Michigan organizations who supported the Federal Youth Coordination Act, and I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the letters in support of S. 409 be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

NATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH,
Washington, DC, January 13, 2006.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
133 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR STABENOW: On behalf of the National Collaboration for Youth and its member organizations, we thank you for your support of the Federal Youth Coordination Act (S. 409) and co-sponsoring the briefing on the legislation held earlier this week.

More than 20 Senate staff members attended the briefing to hear our distinguished panelists discuss the maze of services facing disadvantaged youth and their families. The federal government currently lacks a coordinating body with the mandate to weave the existing tangle of services into a seamless web of supports. We appreciate your leadership on The Federal Youth Coordination Act (FYCA), which fills this need and provides valuable leadership, support and efficiency to state and local efforts across the country.

We look forward to continuing to work with your office on FYCA. Children are simply too important, and resources are too scarce, to not pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

IRV KATZ,
President and CEO.

VOICES FOR MICHIGAN'S CHILDREN
Lansing, MI, April 18, 2005.

Senator DEBBIE STABENOW,
U.S. Senate, 702 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

Hon. SENATOR STABENOW: On behalf of our Board of Directors of Michigan's Children, I

would like to thank you for your sponsorship of the Federal Youth Coordination Act of 2005.

Transitioning to adulthood can be a complicated process for young people, navigating through the supports and services available should not be so complicated. For this reason, Michigan's Children has as one of its legislative and administrative priorities for 2005 advocacy related to at-risk youth transitioning to adulthood. This priority includes supporting state and federal steps to provide more coordinated services to this population. As you are aware, the Federal Youth Coordination Act represents a positive step in this direction.

We are pleased that you have signed on as a Senate co-sponsor to this important piece of legislation. It may interest you to know that the theme of the 2005 Michigan Kids Count Databook will be issues faced by at-risk youth in transition. This should provide a unique opportunity this fall (the databook is scheduled for release in October 2005) to draw some attention to this critical issue. If there is anything that we can provide to you about the Act itself, or the status of young people in Michigan, please don't hesitate to contact our office,

Sincerely,

SHARON PETERS,
President/CEO.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I understand that tonight the Senate will move to passage of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. I support passage of this legislation, which funds nutrition, health, elder abuse prevention, caregiver support, and employment programs that are critical to our Nation's seniors—so critical, in fact, that delegates to the White House Conference on Aging ranked reauthorization as their No. 1 priority.

Today, people over the age of 65 make up over 12 percent of the population, but they will make up 20 percent in the next 45 years. That means one out of every five Americans will be a senior by the year 2050. Just in the past 5 years, Wisconsin has experienced a 6 percent increase in people over the age of 65. It is clear we need a strong Older Americans Act that provides real help if we are to serve the seniors of today and tomorrow.

As ranking member of the Special Committee on Aging, I applaud the bipartisan efforts of Senator ENZI and Senator KENNEDY in producing a bill that preserves the programs in the Older Americans Act. This is not a perfect bill, and in future reauthorizations we must continue to strengthen OAA for both today's seniors and the coming tidal wave of baby boomer retirees. But I am pleased that this reauthorization rejects attempts to dismantle the OAA programs and instead preserves them.

This OAA reauthorization bill includes several pieces I strongly support. First, it strengthens the Senior Community Service Employment Program—now renamed the Older American Community Service Employment Program. Many seniors expect to work past traditional retirement age. Some will do so because they enjoy the phys-

ical and mental benefits of work, but others need additional income to be financially secure.

That is why the OACSEP program is so important. It is the only Federal workforce program specifically targeted to older people, providing community service and job training to low-income adults age 55 and over. Many of us were concerned that the administration proposed a major overhaul of this program that would have disrupted both grantees and participants. Instead, this bill wisely preserves OACSEP and builds on its success.

In particular, the bill maintains OACSEP's role in allowing seniors who have a disability or poor employment prospects to do community service jobs. Instead of turning seniors away, this bill recognizes that seniors who give back to their communities help not only the organizations and families they serve but also help themselves become more self-sufficient.

I thank the HELP Committee for working with me to improve OACSEP. Specifically, the bill expands eligibility to ensure that people who have some income but are still very poor can get OACSEP services. It also requires the Department of Labor to evaluate the performance of OACSEP grantees by hours of community service employment, placement into and retention in paid jobs, earnings, and the number of people served—including the number of people from hard-to-serve populations. And it requires Labor to use performance on these measures as one of its criteria in awarding future grants.

At an Aging Committee hearing in April, the GAO testified that even though thousands of seniors need training and jobs, Labor has restricted OACSEP eligibility so much that grantees can't find enough people to enroll. The bill returns to more realistic eligibility criteria, such as ensuring that SSI benefits no longer count as income in determining whether you are poor enough to qualify for the program.

This reauthorization also recognizes the importance of engaging our next generation of seniors in community service. While many boomers would like to continue working, others will look to mix work and leisure with volunteerism. Older Americans bring a wealth of talent and experience to their communities, and many are eager to make a meaningful contribution. This reauthorization directs the administration on Aging to develop a blueprint for engaging boomers and authorizes a fund for innovation for community stakeholders to engage boomers. These are two important steps in giving the government and communities the tools needed to harness boomers' leadership skills and abilities.

I am also pleased to see several provisions of the Elder Justice Act included

in the Older Americans Act reauthorization. I am an original cosponsor of Elder Justice and strongly support its goals. For far too long, our Nation has turned its back on the shame of elder abuse. With these provisions, we are finally saying enough is enough—elder abuse is unacceptable and we are going to put an end to it.

For the first time, the bill provides real Federal leadership in the fight to end elder abuse by creating an Office of Elder Abuse Prevention. It also includes programs to assist States and Indian tribes with their efforts to protect seniors. Important research and data collection can now begin so we will know the scope of the problem and the best solutions to prevent, detect, and treat elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

In addition, I am pleased this bill preserves the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Although it is a small program, the ombudsman plays a key role in protecting the elderly and disabled in long-term care by serving as an advocate for patients and helping them resolve complaints of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. A recent report by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences noted the importance of routine onsite presence of ombudsman in detecting problems before they become serious.

My home State of Wisconsin has one of the most successful ombudsman programs in the country, and we are proud to have one of the very best ombudsmen, George Potaracke, leading that program. I have worked for many years to ensure that this woefully underfunded program receives increases. These increases are often small, but they improve the lives of people living in long-term care facilities. I hope that future OAA reauthorizations will take the ombudsman's growing caseload into account and increase its funding authorization to match the need.

This legislation also maintains strong support for state and community programs authorized under title III. These programs serve over 8.2 million older persons, providing transportation, access to senior centers, home care, adult daycare, and congregate and home-delivered meals like the Meals on Wheels program. These valuable services allow older persons to live in their communities and remain independent.

Each year, title III gives seniors almost 36 million rides to places like doctors' offices, grocery stores, and senior centers. It ensures that 6,000 senior centers continue to flourish in our communities. It provides 20 million hours of personal care, homemaker, and chore services, and almost 10 million hours of services in adult daycare. And it serves 248 million meals to our seniors. I am pleased that the Older Americans Act reauthorization preserves these important services.

In addition, the Family Caregiver Support program is reauthorized and improved. I was an original cosponsor of this program, which ensures that family members who care for an elderly or disabled relative receive the support and respite services they need. The Family Caregiver Support Program provides access assistance to 585,000 caregivers, conducts counseling and training services for about 300,000 caregivers, and supports respite care services for over 200,000 caregivers.

Now that we are poised to pass the Older Americans Act reauthorization, we must make sure we fund it. All of our good intentions will be empty promises if we don't also provide the resources seniors need. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I have consistently supported increased funding for OAA and will continue to fight for these programs.

Again, I applaud the HELP Committee for this sensible and much needed bill.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President. I am extremely proud to come to the Senate today to recognize the passage of a very important piece of legislation for our Nation's seniors. Democrats and Republicans came together over the past 2 years to reauthorize the Older Americans Act and that's simply good news for seniors across the country.

I thank Chairman ENZI and our Democrat colleagues Senators MIKULSKI and KENNEDY for joining me in this effort. This bill is an excellent example of the positive things we can accomplish when members of both parties work side by side towards a common goal. Over the past 2 years, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging, I have worked with my colleagues—particularly Senator MIKULSKI—to bring together experts in the aging community at hearings, roundtables, and listening sessions. We have listened to the problems facing our seniors and to ideas about what we can do to make their lives better. I rise today with my colleagues on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee as we join in passage of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006, a bill which we all believe will make the lives of seniors better.

Senator MIKULSKI and I worked together to draft and pass the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000. I am proud to have worked with her again to improve and update these vital programs for seniors. Her hard work and experience has been invaluable.

This bill comes about through the dedication and compromise of members in both the Senate and the House. I would like to take this moment to thank everyone on both sides of the aisle who worked on this bill—particularly my colleague from Ohio, Representative TIBERI. They have been

dedicated to the passage of this important legislation, and I thank them for their hard work.

The Older Americans Act is so important for my home state of Ohio. More than 2 million persons over the age of 60 in Ohio are eligible for services under the Older Americans Act. Let me say that again, there are over 2 million Ohio seniors who will have the opportunity to take advantage of the programs in this bill. The bill will bring more than \$44 million to programs in Ohio. This vital funding will go to wonderful organizations such as Meals on Wheels, which provides important nutrition programs at senior centers and in senior's homes.

This funding will also help programs preventing injury and illness to seniors, as well as programs supporting families who are caring for disabled loved ones, including the elderly and adult children with disabilities, and grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. So many Ohioans need these services. In my state 87 percent of those in need of care by a family member are at age 50 or older. Seventy percent of those persons are women. Ohioans caring for a disabled family member spend an average of 4.2 years in this role—time impacting their job, their emotions, and their health.

The Older Americans Act also provides funding and support for the 12 Area Agencies on Aging that serve older Americans living in Ohio. These 12 agencies do a wonderful job of organizing the services I just described, as well as many more. They serve all 88 counties in Ohio and work with State and local providers of services to ensure that all seniors in their areas maintain proper health and nutrition and are aware of the services available to them.

Nationwide, older Americans are a vital and rapidly growing segment of our population. Over 36 million people living in the United States—about 12 percent of the population—are over the age of 65. The Census Bureau projects that 45 years from now, people 65 and older will number nearly 90 million in the United States and will comprise 21 percent of the population.

The Older Americans Act is an important service provider for these Americans, and I strongly believe that the reauthorization bill we just passed updates and strengthens the Act in so many ways. Plans to prepare for changes to the aging demographics will be incorporated into the Act. A Federal interagency council responsible for ensuring appropriate planning for baby boomer-related needs and population shifts across agencies will be created. And grants and technical assistance will be provided to local aging service providers to plan for the baby boomer population.

Our bill will also increase the Federal funding levels for the National

Family Caregiver Support Program over the next 5 years. This important program helps families care for loved ones who are severely ill or disabled, yet want to remain in their homes and community. Our bill expands this program so that all of those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's become eligible for support services. Our bill also clarifies that this program will serve elderly caregivers who are caring for their adult children with developmental disabilities and expands that provision to include all adult children with disabilities who are being cared for by an elderly parent. Lastly, it clarifies that grandparents caring for adopted grandchildren are covered under the National Family Caregiver Support Program and lowers the age threshold for grandparents to 55 years old. These important changes will improve the quality of life for so many who are struggling under the pressures of caring for loved ones—including more than 1,700 Ohioans annually.

Other provisions of the bill encourage seniors to make voluntary contributions to help defray the costs of these programs if they want to which will allow the program to reach out to even more seniors. This will help programs such as Meals-on-Wheels to expand their activities and will enable them to more effectively take contributions from those older Americans willing and able to pay for services. Annually, more than 125,000 Ohioans are served nearly 10 million meals by these important programs. The number of seniors in our population is increasing—and as it does, we need to modify our programs to ensure that they are economically sustainable and equipped to grow.

We know that most Americans wish to live independently in their own homes as they age. Our amendments will help them do so by providing funding so that the Department of Health and Human Services can award grants for the improvement of assistive technology that will allow older Americans to monitor their health while they remain in their homes. This bill also creates a new program awarding grants for the creation of innovative models for the delivery of services to those who remain in their homes. The need for this grant program was discussed at length in a hearing I held on models for aging in place—specifically, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities or NORCs. NORCs are areas in which large concentrations of people live and stay as they age. Essentially, NORCs allow individuals to grow old while living in the communities they love. Programs like NORCs will allow Americans to remain in their homes and communities, the places where they believe they will stay happier and healthier. As I stated before, Americans want to stay in the places they love as they age. This bill will help them do just that.

Further, this bill creates a new momentum towards the provision of consumer-driven choices with respect to long-term care. As we all know, too many older Americans become disabled without the ability or the insurance to pay for their care. Too often, their only choice is to live in a nursing facility away from home. This ends up being more costly and ultimately not what the person would prefer—which is to remain in their home and their community. This bill will facilitate access to long-term care choices and opportunities. It will also enhance the ability of local providers and area agencies on aging to provide advice on the range of options they have available. Older Americans will then have the flexibility to decide for themselves which is the best place for them to age.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a federally funded jobs program geared specifically for older Americans. In Ohio alone, it provides more than 2,000 jobs for low-income Americans age 55 and older. Our bill updates this program to ensure additional stability in those who provide these services for older low-income Americans. This stability will limit the disruption for seniors employed in the program and will also help low-income older Americans get the training they need to move on to better paying jobs.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program has a dual nature, containing provisions that address both community service and job training for low income individuals. Our bill provides a Sense of the Senate supporting this dual approach. Furthermore, our bill limits the time period of participation in the program to 4 years, with an exemption for certain hard to serve individuals. This provision balances the need for a limit to the time a person spends in this employment program with the recognition that certain populations have special needs.

Of great importance to me, this bill also amends the Older Americans Act to focus attention on the mental health needs of older Americans. The amendments establish grants for the mental health screening of older Americans and for increased awareness of the effects of mental health needs on the elderly population. Too often the mental health needs of older Americans are overlooked—but they can be as serious and life-threatening as any other illness. The mental health needs of our seniors must be taken more seriously. We must deal with them more aggressively. I believe that these provisions move us significantly forward in this struggle.

Finally, this bill will help address the terrible problem of seniors who suffer abuse in their homes or while in nursing homes. Elder abuse is a serious problem that we know exists but is not

well documented. This bill increases the profile of these issues while providing important resources for improving the data collection of incidents and outreach to those who may be suffering abuse. I believe that these new grants will move us forward tremendously in our fight against elder abuse. I know that this was an important provision for Chairman ENZI, and I am glad that we were able to include this important program for at-risk seniors.

Once again, I want to thank Senator ENZI and Senator KENNEDY for making this reauthorization a priority for the HELP Committee. Over the months we have negotiated this bipartisan bill, I have greatly appreciated their thoughtful and steady work to get the Older Americans Act to this point. Together, we have worked to get it done.

Today's passage of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 is incredibly important to older Americans, both in Ohio and across the Nation. I would like to commend everyone involved.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, a motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 6197) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TO EXTEND TEMPORARILY CERTAIN AUTHORITIES OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6159 which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the title of the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6159) to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to the consideration of the bill.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, tomorrow—September 30, 2006—many of the SBA's programs and authorities expire. Our committee worked together to come up with a bipartisan package, a true give-and-take on ideas, including many reforms driven by needs identified in the response to the gulf hurricanes last year. That comprehensive small business reauthorization bill, S. 3778, is opposed by the administration, and is being blocked from consideration in the full Senate through various holds.

We finished our work at the end of July, and the bill has been pending on the Senate calendar for consideration