

The Senior Alliance **COLLOQUY**

The Senior Alliance's Monthly Advocacy Update

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Volume 6.6

Welcome to *The Senior Alliance's* advocacy newsletter, COLLOQUY!
This monthly e-mail is a look at the issues, legislation, and events impacting aging.

Federal Budget Update

Last month, the Trump Administration released additional details on its proposed FY 2026 budget for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). While there was encouraging news--such as the decision to move all Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and several other aging and disability initiatives to the newly renamed *Administration for Children, Families and Communities (ACFC)* instead of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)--there are still serious concerns.

The President's budget calls for the elimination of several essential federal programs that the Aging Network relies on to support older adults' health, safety, and independence. These include the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the Community Services Block Grant, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, among others.

Now more than ever, we need your voice. Please reach out to your U.S. Representative and Senators and urge them to safeguard OAA funding and other key aging services in this year's appropriations bills, with special attention to:

Title III B: Home and Community-Based Supportive Services

Title VI: Grants for Native American Aging Programs

Title III C: Nutrition and Supportive Services

Title III E: National Family Caregiver Support Program

The House Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee is expected to hold a markup session on **Monday, July 21**. This is a critical moment--please take action to ensure older adults are not left behind.

Take Action on FY26 Budget!

Federal Reconciliation Bill

With just two weeks until the Republicans' July 4th deadline to pass the Big Beautiful Bill Act, the Senate Agriculture and Finance Committees have released their versions of the reconciliation bill.

- **SNAP Provisions:** The Senate's proposals closely mirror the House bill, continuing to threaten access to food assistance for millions.
- **Medicaid Provisions:** The Senate Finance Committee's version introduces **even harsher changes than the House bill**, putting more people at risk of losing coverage. Key changes include:
 - **Lowering Provider Taxes:** Caps provider taxes at 3.5% (down from 6%) in Medicaid expansion states starting in 2027, which could reduce Medicaid funding.
 - **Stricter Work Requirements:** Extends work requirements to parents with children aged 14 and older, requiring at least 80 hours of work or volunteering per month to maintain Medicaid coverage.
 - **Maintaining Medicare Barriers:** Prevents the federal government from reducing barriers to Medicare Savings Programs, leaving access challenges in place.

Next Steps

The Senate is beginning the "Byrd Bath" process, where the Senate Parliamentarian will review and possibly remove provisions that don't comply with reconciliation rules. Final rulings are expected by mid-next week.

Take Action

Reconciliation is not the same as the regular budget or appropriations process. It allows Congress to make changes to mandatory spending and revenue programs (like Medicaid and SNAP) with a simple majority vote, bypassing the filibuster. It does not include discretionary programs like the Older Americans Act (OAA). However, the proposed cuts would still deeply impact older adults and people with disabilities who rely on these services. There is limited time to advocate. Engaging with Senators now is critical to prevent these harmful provisions from moving forward.

Take Action on Reconciliation Bill!

State Budget Update

The State House has faced significant criticism by the State Senate for the lack of progress in advancing the FY2026 state budget. The State Senate passed their budget in May.

House members were expected to caucus in early June to determine their strategy for moving the budget forward, but negotiations are still ongoing. Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks said she will be meeting with House Speaker Matt Hall in the coming days. Her hope is that it can spur more serious budget talks ahead of the rapidly approaching July 1 statutory budget deadline.

The Senior Alliance will continue to monitor any budget progress and continue to advocate for seniors in our region.

Inside The Senior Alliance Podcast

In this episode, Emma Case, Planning and Advocacy Manager at The Senior Alliance, talks to Rayna Bennett, Executive Director of St. Joseph's Helpers.

They discuss the mission of St. Joseph's Helpers, which includes fixing maintenance issues in homes. These services are offered for seniors, veterans, those with challenges or physical disabilities, and any others who need a helping hand. Some of the services include light plumbing issues, electrical work, installing new lighting, installing ramps, grab bars, and other items that can help people in wheelchairs or other physical limitations.

This allows seniors and others with challenges to be able to live in their homes for as long as possible. The work is done entirely free for the client. They also discuss how you can get involved, make donations, and even volunteer to help.

Listen to the episode [here](#).

Seeking Veteran Representative for Advisory Council

We are currently seeking a veteran or representative from an organization serving veterans to join our Advisory Council to help ensure that the voices and needs of those who have served our country are represented in our planning and programs.

The Advisory Council is a volunteer group that provides guidance, feedback, and community insight to help shape the services and priorities of our organization. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable in guiding our work and advocating for services that truly support veterans in our community.

If interested, please email Emma Case (ecase@thesenioralliance.org) for details.