

The Senior Alliance **COLLOQUY**

The Senior Alliance's Monthly Advocacy Update

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*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

After a 43-day government shutdown, a short-term fiscal year (FY) 2026 spending package was passed reopening the government. The package contains three full-year appropriations bills and a continuing resolution (CR) funding the remaining agencies, including Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through **January 30**.

The CR funds **FY 2026 Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and other aging programs** only through January 30. However, funding usually takes **four to six weeks** to reach Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and delays may be even longer due to staffing shortages at Administration for Community Living (ACL). This means AAAs may feel the worst impacts after the shutdown, despite the government being reopened.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) received full FY 2026 funding in the CR, but the shutdown caused the program to lapse on November 1 for the first time ever. Following court rulings, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) used contingency funds to provide partial benefits during the shutdown.

What's Next

The bill only provides a temporary fix. Congress must still pass the remaining FY 2026 appropriations bills before January 30. Another shutdown in January remains possible if Congress cannot agree on FY 2026 appropriation bills. Continued advocacy is needed over the next few weeks to ensure OAA and other critical aging programs are protected in the next spending bill early next year.

The Senior Alliance will continue to advocate with our federal legislators on these issues to ensure protection and continued funding for FY 2026. Take action through our website or using the button below to ensure the needs of older adults are heard.

Take Action on FY 2026 Federal Budget

Recent Michigan Legislation: Three Key Bills to Watch

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 456](#) -- Silver Alert System (Sen. Mallory McMorrow, 8th District)

Purpose:

To establish a *Silver Alert public notification system* in Michigan for missing seniors or vulnerable adults (e.g., those with Alzheimer's or dementia).

How it works:

Local law enforcement would notify the Michigan State Police (MSP) when a qualifying individual goes missing. MSP would then activate alerts through the state's emergency alert system, including wireless emergency alerts (e.g. to mobile phones), digital networks, roadway signage, etc.

The bill builds on existing frameworks which currently only allows alerts shared among law enforcement--not to the public at large.

Who qualifies:

Seniors or vulnerable adults who cannot return home without assistance; those with mental illness or cognitive impairment; those for whom there is immediate danger, etc.

What's Next:

A version of this type of legislation (House Bill 4362) has already passed the Michigan House with near unanimous bipartisan support. SB 456 has been referred to committee on Government Operations.

House Bill (HB) 4362 -- Missing Senior or Vulnerable Adult Alert System
(Rep. Gina Johnsen, 78th District)

Purpose:

Similar to HB 456, this is the House's version to require that the Michigan State Police run a wireless alert plan for missing seniors or vulnerable adults.

How it works:

Local law enforcement are to report a missing senior/vulnerable adult to MSP. MSP then has to activate an alert through existing wireless emergency alert systems under federal law.

Who qualifies:

Seniors (60+) who cannot return home without help and are reported missing.

Vulnerable adults (18+) with disabilities, mental illness, advanced age, etc., particularly if they cannot protect themselves or require supervision.

What's Next:

Passed in the House with near unanimous bipartisan support. Referred to Senate committee on Civil Rights, Judiciary, and Public Safety.

Senate Bill (SB) 330 -- Jury Duty Exemptions / Caregiver Exemptions
(Sen. McMorrow, 8th District)

Purpose:

To create additional **exemptions from jury service** for certain family caregivers:

a *familial caretaker* of a hospice patient,

parental caregiver of a child with a serious health condition.

The bill responds to arguments that caregivers (e.g. of a hospice patient, or a child with serious illness) are already under heavy burden, often cannot leave the person in their care for jury-duty obligations. There have been stories of courts requiring caregivers to repeatedly get medical letters, even after someone has passed, which is emotionally difficult.

Definitions & scope:

Familial caretaker: family member, close family friend, or another important adult in the life of the patient/family who provides full-time care, nurturing, or protection. Family members include spouses, adult children, grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings, etc. It also includes "period of bereavement" (one year after death of patient in hospice).

Parental caregiver: someone caring for a child (biological, adopted, foster, stepchild, legal ward, child of domestic partner, or someone who stood "in loco parentis" when the child was a minor) with a serious health condition (illness, injury, impairment requiring inpatient care or continuous treatment).

Process:

To claim the exemption, the caregiver must:

request exemption with the court,

provide verification (doctor, certified nurse, or official member of hospice / health care team).

What's Next:

Referred to Senate committee on Judiciary.

Read more on these bills [here](#).

Give Hunger a Holiday

In Michigan, 1 in 7 older adults struggles with food insecurity. During the holidays, your generous donations enable The Senior Alliance to continue to meet the needs of food-insecure aging adults and adults with disabilities in our community when traditional meal-delivery services are unavailable.

Because of you, in FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025), on Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, over 2,900 hot meals were served. This year, we hope to serve even more vulnerable members in our area. Your donation, whether \$5 or \$500, will help provide meals and also support other services for the aging adults in our community - through this holiday season and beyond.

Help us Give Hunger a Holiday by donating today.

[Donate to Give Hunger a Holiday](#)

[Advocate!](#)