

November 16, 2022

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: FY23 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill

Dear Senator Leahy,

We represent national organizations working to improve the experience of aging through public policy, research, philanthropy, and civil discourse. We are writing in support of language to be included in the FY23 Appropriations Bill that we believe would help ensure stronger inclusion of older people in US humanitarian assistance around the world. The Senate State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill Explanatory Note included this paragraph:

***Older People.*—The Committee is concerned with the lack of inclusion of older people in humanitarian, evacuation, resettlement, and recovery efforts and directs the Secretary of State and USAID Administrator to brief the Committees on Appropriations, not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of the act, on steps taken to ensure their inclusion, including the establishment of relevant policies and reporting mechanisms.**

We believe that inclusion of this language in the final FY23 Appropriations Bill Explanatory note will raise the profile of the particular risks to and needs of older people in humanitarian response. Additionally, a requirement that the State Department and USAID share information with the Committee on their efforts to include older people will encourage the agencies to analyze ways to improve funding and programming for them.

In a recent article in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, “**Too Old to Flee: Addressing the Needs of Older Persons in Conflict Zones**,” the authors identified a number of serious risks to older people during conflict and humanitarian crises, including neglect, lack of access to medical care and pensions, and isolation from humanitarian aid services that may not reach those in hard to reach areas or who cannot leave their homes. The article notes that Inadequate response to the needs of older people “contributes to higher mortality and morbidity for older civilians compared to younger civilians in conflict, something that has been well-documented during emergencies and disasters.”

The authors urge governments to acknowledge that older adults have unique needs and require targeted support and should consider specific policy, resource, and staff development on the needs of older people and age-responsive service delivery.

We thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Ramsey Alwin, President and CEO, National Council on Aging
Cindy Cox-Roman, President and CEO, HelpAge USA
Lindsay Goldman, CEO, Grantmakers in Aging
Peter Kaldes, President and CEO, American Society on Aging
Nancy LeaMond, Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer, AARP
Stephanie Lederman, Executive Director, American Federation for Aging Research
Katie Smith Sloan, President and CEO, LeadingAge; Executive Director, Global Ageing Network

