



CONGRESSIONAL
LGBT EQUALITY CAUCUS

Administrator Kathy Greenlee
Administration for Community Living
330 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

February 17, 2016

Dear Administrator Greenlee:

We understand that the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) will soon propose changes to the planning guidance that it provides to the States regarding the disposition of funds made available under the Older Americans Act (OAA). As you develop the revised guidance, we remind you that Congress intended that States give "preference . . . to providing services to older individuals with . . . greatest social need" – including individuals who have need caused by non-economic factors, such as "cultural" or "social" isolation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 3025.

There is increasing evidence that many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender ("LGBT") elders face severe social and cultural isolation, which threatens their capacity to live independently. As a group, LGBT elders have poorer physical health, worse mental health, and lower incomes than other elders. These problems are compounded by the fact that LGBT elders often do not have as strong a social support network as their peers. For example, LGBT elders are twice as likely to live alone, half as likely to have close relatives to call for help, and four times less likely to have children to assist them.

Despite this evidence, in many parts of the country, the aging services network has not made a systematic assessment as to whether LGBT elders should be targeted for services funded under the Older Americans Act. As a result, many LGBT elders may not be receiving the services and supports they need – and that Congress intends them to have.

In order to fully implement Congressional intent, we urge that ACL's revised planning guidance:

- requires each state, in their State Plans, to provide assurance that they assess all groups that may be eligible for designation as a "greatest social need" population; and
- expressly includes LGBT older individuals as one of the groups whose needs *must* be assessed by the State Units on Aging.

We understand that, following review by OMB, ACL will seek comments on its proposed new guidance. We look forward to seeing ACL's proposed guidance and to working with you to ensure that the guidance adequately addresses the pressing needs of LGBT elders across the country.

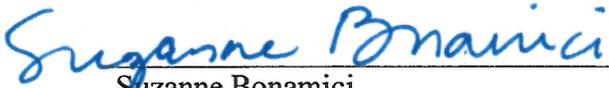
Sincerely,



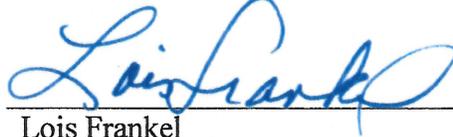
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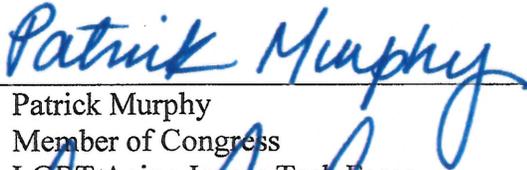
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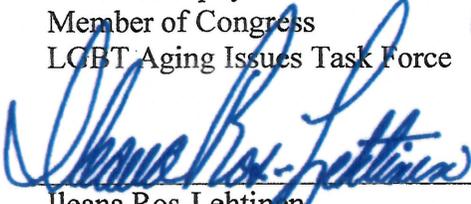
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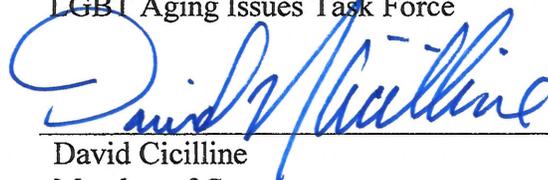
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