

From the Offices of
SENATOR PAT. McNAMARA
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Capitol 4-3121, Ext. 5364
and
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Room 1235, House Office Building
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FOR RELEASE
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A bill to establish a permanent and independent United States Commission on Aging was introduced jointly today by Senator Pat. McNamara (D.-Mich.), Chairman of the Senate's Special Committee on Aging, and Representative John E. Fogarty (D.-R.I.), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Department of Labor and Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The bill provides for a three-member commission, appointed by the President, and responsible to him to be concerned full time with the full range of problems and potentialities of America's more than 17 million senior citizens. It authorizes planning and project grants to assist the States in developing programs to benefit older persons, and provides for Federal sharing in the administrative costs of a State's planning and coordinating agency. Grants to institutions and organizations for demonstration, research and training in the field of aging are also authorized.

In introducing their identical bills, Senator McNamara and Representative Fogarty both stressed "the need for a high-level agency that will command respect and pay full attention to the needs of our elderly." Their joint sponsorship, they said, grows out of agreement that an independent agency would be far more likely to effect coordinated policy making and programming than would a sub-agency of any one department with a multiplicity of other interests and responsibilities.

Representative Fogarty, who fathered the bill for last year's White House Conference on Aging, was outspoken in his impatience with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, saying that "five years, one White House Conference, twelve regional meetings and some thirty Senate hearings later, we find ourselves in the same dilemma or perhaps a more serious one because we have failed in our promise to the Nation's senior citizens."

Senator McNamara is also the sponsor of S. 1359, introduced on March 15, 1961, which he described as "intended to achieve much the same objectives," but which provides instead for the establishment of a United States Office of Aging within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to be headed by an Assistant Secretary for Aging. He urged early consideration of the alternative proposals, stating, "I believe it important that this Congress act promptly to create within our governmental structure one effective center for action in the field of aging."

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REMARKS BY
SENATOR PAT. McNAMARA
on the Senate Floor
January 31, 1962

A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON AGING

I send to the desk a bill and ask that it be appropriately referred.

This bill would establish a permanent and independent United States Commission on Aging, which would be concerned full time with the full range of problems and potentialities of America's more than 17 million elder citizens. Representative Fogarty is simultaneously introducing an identical bill in the House.

Last March I introduced S. 1359, intended to achieve much the same objectives as in the bill I now present. However, it provided instead for the establishment of a United States Office of Aging within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to be headed by an Assistant Secretary for Aging.

Both of these bills also authorize Federal grants to assist the States in the development of programs to benefit older persons. My new bill would further the well-established principle that each State should have a focal point for leadership in aging by providing grants for a share of the administrative costs of the State planning and coordinating agency.

Despite similarity of objectives, the organizational approaches of S. 1359 and my new bill are obviously quite different. S. 1359 would strengthen an existing agency; the proposal Congressman Fogarty and I are now making jointly, establishes a new agency.

I am well aware that there is ample evidence that the effectiveness of an agency in determining public policy is directly related to its place in the established departmental structure of government. Sound judgment would, therefore, dictate against creating a new instrument of government if one already exists that can do the job that so urgently needs to be done.

I believe, however, that we do not now have such an agency of government: one that can give full time and attention to the full range of interrelated needs and potentials of older people, serve as their eloquent spokesman, and -- because of its independence and high position in the governmental structure -- command the wholehearted cooperation of all governmental and nongovernmental agencies in achieving effective action.

Of our established agencies, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has responsibilities in aging that far exceed those of any other existing governmental agency. There is no question about this. The question is how to achieve the maximum coordinated effort of our full resources, including those of such governmental agencies as the Labor Department, the Housing and Home Finance Agency, the Veterans Administration, and of many voluntary organizations working in this area. Even with the best of intentions by all partners and the most capable guidance by the partner with major responsibility, can we expect the same all-out effort that would result from a more nearly equal partnership?

To achieve maximum cooperative effort, do we not need an equal voice in defining our goals and an equal stake in achieving them; equal accountability for failures and equal credit for successes?

The bill I am introducing today, therefore, provides for a high-level independent agency which will devote full time to the total

range of needs and potentials of older people, without fragmentation and with balanced perspective, and which will command the respect and full attention of the Nation's total efforts in behalf of the aging.

With the introduction of this measure, our Committee on Labor and Public Welfare will have before it alternative proposals for action. I hope that action will be taken during this session of the Congress.

I have asked that my bill be held at the desk for five days so that such other Senators as may want to join me in co-sponsoring it will have that opportunity.

I ask unanimous consent that a summary of the bill be printed in the Record at the conclusion of my remarks.

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