

HR 3708

**Remarks of
Congressman John E. Fogarty**

**Supplemental Appropriation
Public Law 89-73
(Older Americans Act of 1965)**

89th Congress

H.R. 3708

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There is a real sense of urgency in speaking in support of the supplemental appropriation and, particularly, the section authorizing funds for the Older Americans Act of 1965.

After four years of frustrating delays, the enactment of this legislation established the organization and approved funds for a practical, positive program to achieve the goals for which the White House Conference on Aging was held in January 1961. The 600 recommendations of this meeting have been shelved for the lack of a responsible organization with sufficient staff and funds to carry out the mandate of more than 2,000 of the Nation's leaders in the field of aging who attended as delegates and consultants.

Few bills, within my recollection, in Congress have merited and been given the bipartisan support that the Older Americans Act has received. You will recall that it passed this House on March 31 of this year a vote of 394 to 1. It received a prompt and favorable vote in the Senate and was signed by the President June 14.

The budget for the Older Americans Act was carefully drawn to provide proper incentives to the states to be equitably distributed in recognition of the percentage of older persons within the state to be served and broad enough to make possible a practical, yet imaginative program for older Americans throughout the Nation.

The President defined the appropriations and grants in the bill as "seed corn." These amounts are small but well-planted, will result in achievements far beyond the minimum outlay of the money authorized by the bill.

I do not see how, in good faith, we can deny these funds or postpone their availability when the need is so apparent and further delay so unnecessary.

We have only to observe the War on Poverty to recognize the limitation of its scope as it applies to older Americans.

That a bill such as the Economic Opportunity Act could have been written without an awareness that the elderly are also poor is an oversight that an administration on aging could have corrected at the pre-passage stage. Instead, efforts are now being made to stretch and extend the language of the law to include a program for the elderly.

That a special task force had to be named to explore possible projects for older persons is a task that the staff and advisory committee authorized under the Older Americans Act would have fulfilled as part of its regular function.

The implementation of the Medicare program with all of its many ramifications for the aged extended far beyond the areas of hospital and health care.

The housing legislation offers new vistas for decent living arrangements for more of the elderly.

The Education Act creates new opportunities for continued learning in the later years.

The manpower and training programs include untapped possibilities for employment and income supplementation for the elderly.

These and many more examples could be cited of the vast area of service and programs that are presently in operation. However, even a casual review of the projects and achievements to date would reveal the conspicuous absence of aging in the planning and projection.

I cite these programs not in criticism but to illustrate the potentials for older persons that are not being developed or coordinated because there has not been an effective organization to serve as consultant and advisor in the field of aging.

Each day that we delay the funds necessary to establish and finance the organization authorized under the Older Americans Act finds the elderly further overlooked and denied his rightful opportunities.

I urge your support of the supplemental appropriation, knowing that it is in reality the fulfillment of the pledge we implied in our original vote of 394 to 1 for the Older Americans Act of 1965.