Opening Statement of Rep. James Comer (R-KY), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Hearing:
"Examining the Older Americans Act: Promoting Independence and Dignity for
Older Americans"
May 15, 2019

"Today's life expectancy rate in our nation is at a historic high, which is great news, and it means we need to be doing all we can to ensure that Americans have access to quality, timely services which allow them to live in their homes as long as possible. This hearing will help us better understand what might be done to ensure the law is aging as well as the people it serves.

Since 1965, the *Older Americans Act*, or OAA, has governed the organization and delivery of services for senior citizens throughout the country. With more than 41 million Americans 65 and older, the social and nutritional programs offered by OAA are critical to helping them maintain independence.

The reach of this law is substantial and covers many aspects of elder care. In addition to well-known programs like Meals on Wheels, OAA supports services provided by more than 300 state, Tribal, and Native Hawaiian organizations and approximately 20,000 local providers. Some of these services include: nutrition programs providing meals at senior centers, schools, and churches; care to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of seniors; family caregiver support systems; and community service employment opportunities for older Americans. These types of programs offer valuable assistance for America's seniors, and the federal government should continue to support them.

As our committee considers a reauthorization of OAA, I am confident that we can work together on bipartisan legislation to support our nation's seniors through

effective policy. I thank the witnesses for being here and hope today's discussion will offer insights into how we can build upon OAA's flexible policies to promote consumer-driven, independent living for older Americans."

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