

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and
Human Services, and Education
Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). We request that funding for this program be appropriated at no less than \$531 million in the fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

SCSEP provides part-time, minimum-wage community service opportunities for unemployed low-income seniors with poor employment prospects. This year, approximately 100,000 seniors nationally will have access to assistance from the SCSEP program. Last year, approximately 94,000 were served, and 40 million hours of community services were provided at local community-based organizations. Notably, 33 percent of participants obtained employment as a result of participating in this program.

The SCSEP program was reauthorized last year as part of the Older Americans Act with strong bipartisan support. This was due to the tremendous difference the program makes in the lives of our nation's low-income seniors and their communities.

The Administration's FY 2008 budget request does not recognize the overwhelming needs of low-income seniors. In fact, their FY 2008 budget request is \$134 million, or 28 percent less than current funding levels. If the Administration's request were to be enacted, more than 41,000 poor older Americans would not receive badly needed assistance from SCSEP.

We strongly urge you provide no less than \$531 million for FY2008, allowing SCSEP to maintain current participant levels and adjust for the expected increase in the minimum wage. We must ensure that in challenging economic times for our nation's low-income seniors, they have access to critical SCSEP services.

Sincerely,


Blanch L. Lincoln


Arlen Specter

Chairman Tom Harkin and Ranking Member Arlen Specter
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Request for Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Funding
May 4, 2007

Mark Pryor

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