



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

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**Statement of Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)**  
**Committee on Education and Labor**  
**Markup of H.R. 4334, *Dignity in Aging Act of 2019***  
**September 18, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Thank you, Chairman Scott, and I thank my colleague and friend, Mrs. Bonamici, from Oregon, for her hard work on this important bipartisan legislation.

Innovations in science and technology are allowing Americans to live longer. In fact, the average life expectancy in America today is higher than in any other period in history and our nation’s senior population is expected to double by 2060.

I proudly represent a district that has one of the largest constituencies of older Americans, so I am pleased to be co-leading this bipartisan legislation before us, which reauthorizes the Older Americans Act.

Since 1965, this statute has provided a wide range of social and nutrition services for Americans aged 60 years or older. These services help older Americans lead healthy and independent lives by offering meals, job training, health promotion, caregiver support, transportation, and more.

Included in this legislation is language from my bipartisan bill with Congressman Levin, encouraging the use of caregiver assessments to identify the needs of family caregivers. This individualized approach to care will ensure that both caregivers and those who require assistance are provided tailored support to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

Additionally, it includes long-overdue updates from the Younger Onset Alzheimer's Act I co-led with Congresswoman Rice. Those under 60 with this heartbreaking disease face unique hardships – for both them and their families. This legislation ensures individuals of any age living with Alzheimer's receive full access to the services and support provided by the Older Americans Act.

There is another group of older Americans in this country that we must not forget: the nearly 80,000 Holocaust survivors who live among us. As victims of truly the very worst of humanity, Holocaust survivors deserve devoted care and support to address the unimaginable, horrific trauma they experienced. Sadly, one-third of our country's Holocaust survivors live in poverty.

This Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute works to address the needs of aging Holocaust survivors. Specifically, the amendment codifies an existing national technical assistance center devoted to expanding the capacity of the aging network to meet the needs of aging Holocaust survivors, veterans, and survivors of historical trauma.

These men and women have survived unconscionable suffering, yet many continue to live with physical and emotional scars from the horror they faced. This amendment acknowledges their resilience and seeks to offer opportunities that allow them to live healthy, dignified, and independent lives through their elder years.

Additionally, the amendment recognizes that OAA nutrition programs should meet the religious, cultural, or ethnic dietary requirements of all older Americans.

Alongside the many changes we make to strengthen and improve the underlying bill, I am deeply encouraged that this committee will come together to recognize the unique risk institutionalization presents to Holocaust survivors. Including our bipartisan provision is essential to upholding the very spirit of this law.

I urge my colleagues to vote 'yes' to this amendment, in doing so we reaffirm our commitment to our nation's older generation."