

A person stands on a beach at sunset, looking out at the ocean. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The person's silhouette is visible against the bright sky. The water reflects the colors of the sunset.

# Election Over: Next for Aging Policy?

November 12, 2024

Bob Blancato

[rblancato@matzblancato.com](mailto:rblancato@matzblancato.com)



# If the election was a song

- Beatles: A hard day's night
- Rolling Stones: You can't always get what you want
- Dolly Parton: Here you come again
- how about Help?





# One Week post 2024 Election

- Most of the dust has settled
- I come today as a person who works in policy politics and punditry, not part of the new endangered species- the polling profession
- We have a new but not completely new President: Donald Trump
- We have a flip in the Senate to Republican control 53-45-2
- And the House?

# The votes were cast

- More than 158 million ballots were cast and 52% were older voters (AP VoteCast)
- In Arizona, men 50 to 64 years old gave Trump a 30-point advantage
- The campaign was about a lot of things, personality, issues
- Exit polls suggest issues among older adults included cost of living, social security, caregiving, and the environment (AARP)
- What comes next and what might be on the aging policy agenda?

Men 65+ (12%)

44%

55%

Women 65+ (16%)

54%

45%

Source: NBC News exit polling in 10 key states.





# First: Convene a lame duck session in Congress

- Lame duck meaning 53 members of current Congress not returning for 2025 (8 Senate and 45 House)
- What will start the LDS?
- Emergency spending bill for disasters
- More than 100 major disasters declared by FEMA

# What will fit in the emergency funding bill?

- Main Questions: How big? What else can be added?
- On aging front NANASP and MOWA spearheading an effort supported by more than 60 national groups for \$200 million for OAA nutrition program
- Should have good idea by end of week where this bill could be going

October 30, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

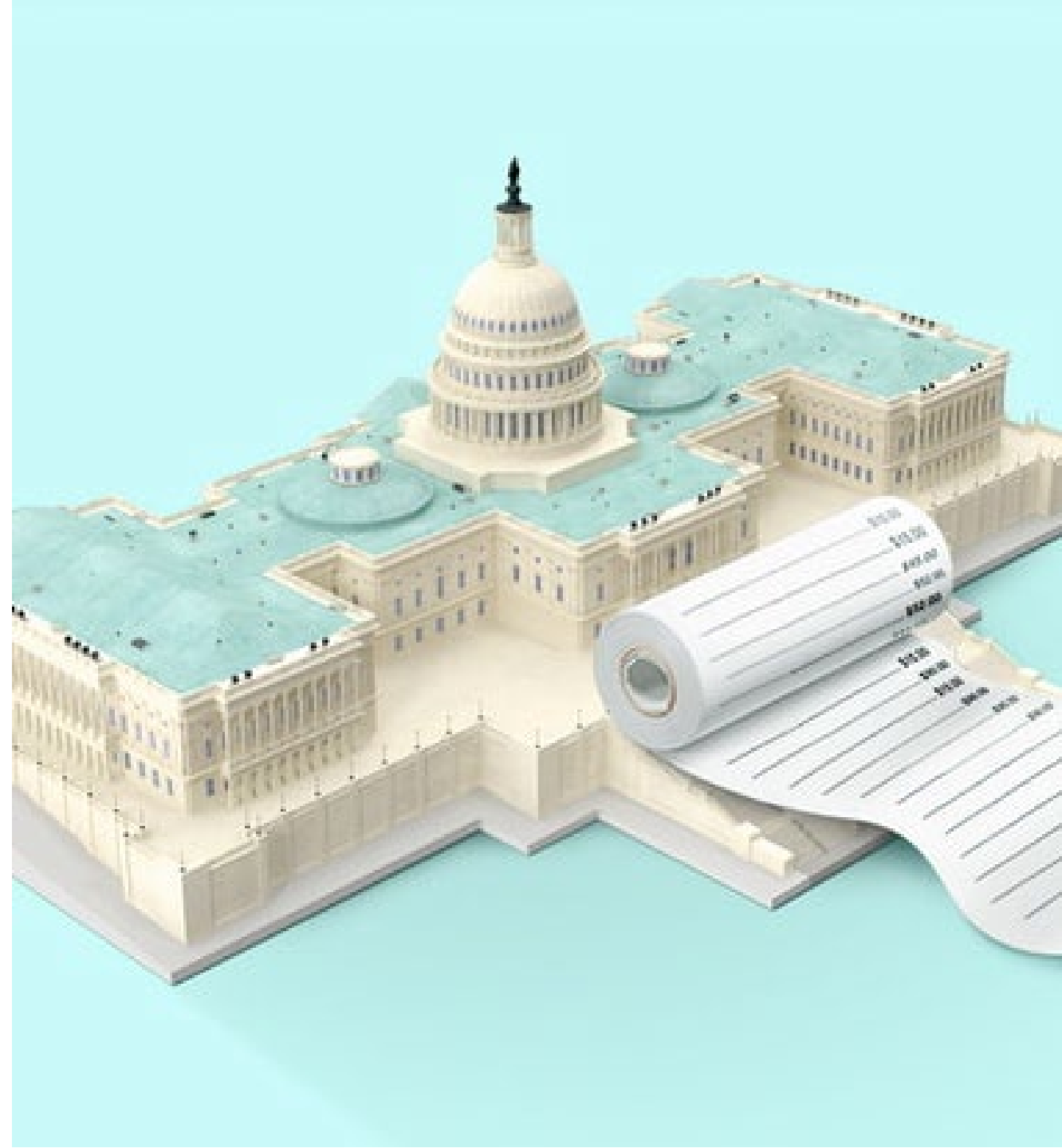
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell:

The 65 undersigned national organizations write today regarding the urgent need for emergency supplemental funding for senior nutrition programs to address the rapidly escalating national crises of hunger and isolation that impact millions of older Americans. **We urge you to prioritize \$200 million in emergency supplemental funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program to especially address mounting wait lists for Meals on Wheels services.** This would enable senior nutrition programs to provide nearly 75 million additional meals and serve approximately 650,000 more older adults in desperate need.

# Funding for rest of FY 2025?

- Funding now only provided through December 20
- What does Congress do?  
What does the new President want them to do?
- Unclear right now
  - Extend the current CR into next year for the new Admin?
  - Pass an Omnibus funding bill?







# Healthcare Package expected

- Again, questions on how big and what role does new President play
- Expectations:
  - Extension of telehealth
  - Addressing physician pay reduction in Medicare
  - Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs)



# Possibly: Final action on the Older Americans Act renewal

- Senate HELP Committee passed S4776 in July
  - Bipartisan bill, but  $\frac{1}{4}$  of those Senators who worked on it not back in 2025
  - 4-year renewal of act with 18% increase in funding
  - 2025 White House Conference on Aging
  - New Direct Care Workforce Resource Center
  - Flexibility to provide grab-and-go
  - Clarifies AAA contracting
  - If not done in lame duck, process starts fresh in 2025 and could be entirely different



# OAA and a Trump Administration

---

- Last reauthorization was done in 2020, during Trump's term
- Bipartisan nature of S4776 may carry over
- Will authorization levels stay at 18% increase over 4 years?
- Will Trump support a 2025 White House Conference on Aging?



# It'll be 2025 before we know it

- What will happen between now and President Trump's swearing in on January 20
- Transition work:
  - Meet with agencies and subagencies to see what you are inheriting
  - Start filling out your Cabinet and Subcabinet
- Rumors start flying....





# Presidential Appointments

- Top officials will be nominated in some cases before Inauguration, then subcabinet and independent agencies
- Susie Wiles already named as first women Chief of Staff
- Easier confirmation for positions with Senate going to the R's



# January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

- Swearing in and listening for what is in the Inauguration speech
- Soon could follow is a State of the Union address



# Tax reform coming...

## For Family Caregivers too?

- Prospects are good that family caregivers will be tied to a larger Trump priority: tax reform
- Broad tax bill will be one of the first bills taken up by Congress
- This is an indication of how caregiving became a real political issue
- Could include ending taxation of Social Security benefits







# MEDICAID

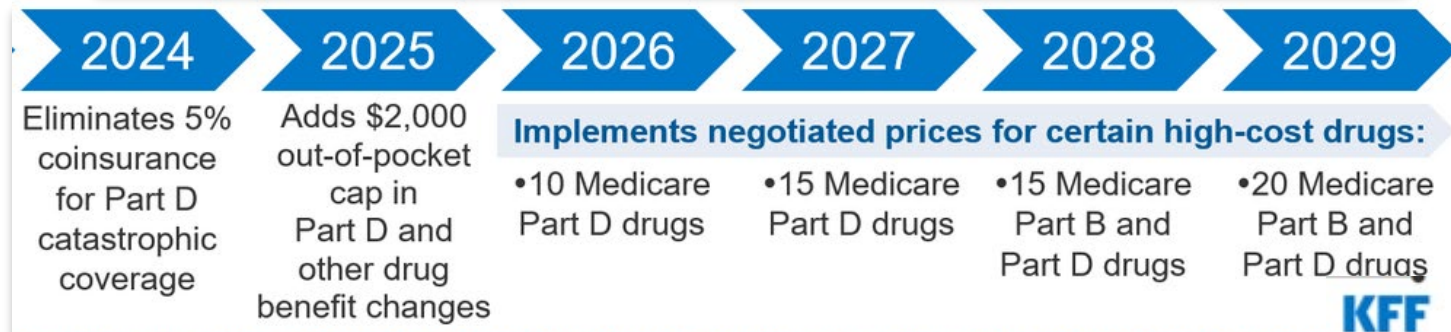
## More problematic: Medicaid Reform

- Talks about Medicaid block grants seems to have diminished
- New twists on Medicaid waivers may happen even as 1115 waivers have expanded policy options in HCBS
- Expect an active early start including
  - capping the federal share to those states who expanded Medicaid under the ACA
  - Using Medicaid waivers to promote things like work requirements
- And what about those 13 million who lost coverage through redetermination this year

# Unclear: Medicare

- Less clear is what happens to Medicare
- One likely target: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation established as part of the ACA
- Another likely target: prescription drug provisions of the IRA, especially Medicare negotiation
- But IRA will not be repealed as \$2000 cap supported by both sides
- Other issues
  - Date of Solvency
  - Value based care do better or worse?

## Implementation Timeline of the Prescription Drug Provisions





# Future of ACA

- It will not be repealed but could go after premium subsidies
  - used by some 20 million (9 out of 10 qualify)
  - If abolished could lead to 79% premium increase
  - Average 2025 benchmark premium \$497/month without subsidy





# ACL and a Trump Administration

- Should be noted that among initiatives taken by ACL in first Trump Admin included
  - “Commit to Connect” Campaign – Addressing Social Isolation using public-private partnerships (2020)
  - Started developing National Family Caregiving Strategy
    - RAISE Family Caregivers Act and The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act passed in 2017
- Other initiatives of note
  - National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (2019)
  - First ever Research Agenda for Adult Protective Service (APS) (2020)
  - ACL Health IT Prize Competition (2020)
  - First national data on adult maltreatment (NAMRS) (2017)

# What will happen to Elder Justice under Trump 2

- First action could be the repeal of Nursing Home minimum staffing rule which has drawn ire of the nursing home industry and Republicans
- Prior Trump Administration approached elder abuse as a crime and dedicated important law enforcement resources to fighting scams
- Scams both in number and in type have grown dramatically, including deceptive campaign tactics
- Money Wise: Campaign ads pressured 52 seniors into donating over \$6 million to both parties



# Elder Justice Act up for renewal

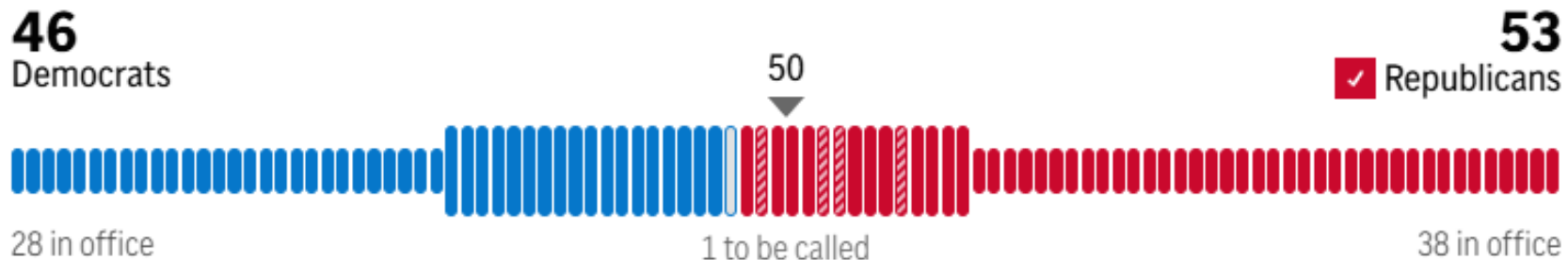
- Celebrates 15 years in 2025
- Will be a 2025 issue but what role will Trump Administration and Congress play? Will it go back to being bipartisan?





# Senate Flip

- Changes could be profound in terms of who assumes more power
- A return to reconciliation where bills pass Senate with simple majority vs 60 votes
- New Chairs:
  - Finance: Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
  - Appropriations: Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)
  - HELP: Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
  - Finance?
  - Special Aging?
- Senate Majority Leader?



# Aging Champions who lost re-election



Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA)



Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)



Messages and promises are different than actual policy getting done

The candidate with the message won again.

Messages and promises are different than actual policy getting done

No question Trump will move quickly especially in areas where he does not need Congressional approval



# What motivated Trump voters in the end?

- We must adapt to the political environment we are entering. Assuming the worst does not allow you to work for what's better.
- The economy and how people felt it impacted them
  - Our aging agenda should allow older adults to achieve and maintain economic security
- Cost of living: from food to medicine to health care
  - Lets push the value of social care in America as one driver of lowering costs and improving outcomes
- Remember and reinforce your mission, purpose and principles

Thank  
You

Contact me at  
[Rblancato@matzblancato.com](mailto:Rblancato@matzblancato.com)

