

Thomas M. Susman
Director
Governmental Affairs Office

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW - Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 662-1760
FAX: (202) 662-1762

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The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

On behalf of the American Bar Association and its over 400,000 members, I urge you to reestablish the former House Permanent Select Committee on Aging. Since the Committee ceased operation in 1992, issues facing older adults have continued to grow. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2050 over 20 percent of Americans will be over the age of 65. This population shift not only affects older persons and those approaching older age, but also those who provide care and support. Congress must act to keep up with the issues that our rapidly aging population presents. For over two decades the ABA has supported the reestablishment of this committee because it is the only one in the House that would focus solely on issues critical to the senior population, and we believe that this is an important step to ensure that Congress effectively addresses issues of importance to older adults.

As you know, from 1974 to 1992 the House and Senate each had Select Committees on Aging that dealt with matters affecting our older population. During its existence in the House of Representatives, the Select Committee on Aging held over 1,000 hearings and issued reports that led to advances on issues of vital importance to older persons such as mandatory retirement requirements, age discrimination in employment and credit, the Older Americans Act, elder abuse, guardianship, Medicare, Social Security, pensions, and nursing home standards. After its abolition, no other existing Committee has had the same amount of time or expertise to dedicate to the wide range of issues important to older adults.

We hope you will consider reestablishing the House Permanent Select Committee on Aging to address the ever-growing issues affecting older adults. We stand ready to assist you in your efforts.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Susman