

Congress continued its temporary funding policy by passing another Continuing Resolution to avert a government shutdown and maintain agency funding. This resolution sets two new deadlines: March 1 for a number of federal agencies including the Department of Agriculture, and the second deadline is March 8 for funding for the Departments of Health, Labor and Education and Defense. By those dates, either separate funding bills for agencies must be passed or they could be combined into an omnibus funding bill. A date of concern is April 30. If this process is not completed across the board cuts also known as sequestration would be applied.

On January 26, the Administration for Community Living [announced both the retirement](#) of Edwin Walker, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging, and the appointment of Kari Benson to serve in this role. Kari's most current title is the director of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Aging and Adult Services Division and also serves as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Representative Shontel Brown (D-OH) cosponsored Rep. Joyce Beatty's (D-OH) bill ([H.R.7075](#)) that reauthorizes the HOME Investment Partnerships Program for the next five years. Since 1992, HOME has supported a wide variety of housing financial needs and provides funding to housing developments that serves seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Representatives Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) reintroduced the Fairness in Nursing Home Arbitration Act ([H.R.7719](#)) on January 29. This legislation currently has 9 cosponsors, and seeks to protect elderly Americans in nursing homes by prohibiting long-term care facilities from requiring or soliciting residents into binding arbitration agreements.

On January 31, the National Council on Aging and the National Consumers League, with the backing of 40 national obesity and chronic disease organizations, introduced the nation's first Obesity Bill of Rights. They hope this will be adopted in clinical settings and standard medical education to ensure people with obesity are screened, diagnosed, counseled and treated appropriately. The [Obesity Bill of Rights](#) has the support of bipartisan lawmakers, including Representatives Brad Wenstrup, DPM (R-OH) and Gwen Moore (D-WI) who in September 2023 introduced the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act ([H.R.4818](#)). The legislation will expand Medicare beneficiaries' access to treatment options, and has 65 cosponsors as of January 5.

On January 31, The Department of Health and Human Services hosted their first ever Food is Medicine Summit. This full day event featured experts, policymakers, and advocates to collaborate and discuss how food-based programs can lead to better health outcomes. Some panelists focused on integrating food is medicine into senior meal programs and services. The recording of the summit can be viewed [here](#).

State Update

This past August, the Ohio Senate formed a new [select committee on housing](#). Chaired by State Senator Michele Reynolds, the committee's goal is to "learn about what barriers (to housing) currently exist... (and) how to foster smart residential development so that more people can participate in the American dream of homeownership." The committee heard testimony at a series of public hearings, focusing on housing shortages, inflation, taxes and affordability. Benjamin Rose provided testimony to the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing at the public hearing held at the Cleveland Foundation headquarters on January 11. Testimony provided at all select committee meetings is available [online](#).

Storm Clouds or Calm Seas? The Outlook of Aging Policies for 2024

Please join us on Thursday, February 29 at 1 p.m. as Bob Blancato, President of Matz, Blancato, and Associates and the National Coordinator of the [Elder Justice Coalition](#) leads a discussion on what we can anticipate from federal aging policies in 2024. Topics will include the renewal of the Older Americans Act, health care reform and how aging policies will impact our respective states and communities. [Register now!](#)