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MARIPOSA COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 83-99

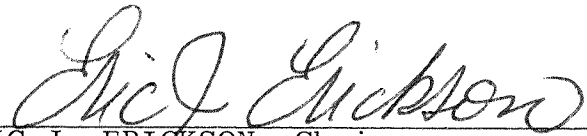
ENDORISING THE LETTER OF CONGRESSMAN CLAUDE PEPPER
SETTING FORTH HIS POSITION REGARDING THE
RIGHTS OF OLDER AMERICANS

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors, County
of Mariposa, to endorse the letter of Congressman Claude Pepper
to Congressman Tony Coelho setting forth the position that
seniors participate directly in decisionmaking about Older
Americans Act Programs with emphasis on Title I of the OAA.

FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded
to Congressmen Pepper and Coelho, Edwin Gipson, and Central
Sierra Area Agency on Aging.


PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Mariposa County Board of Super-
visors this 5th day of April, 1983 by the following vote:

- AYES: Taber, Barrick, Dalton, Erickson, Moffitt
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None
- ABSTAINED: None



 ERIC J. ERICKSON, Chairman
 Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:



 ELLEN BRONSON, County Clerk
 Ex Officio Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL
SUFFICIENCY:



 RICHARD K. DENHALTER
 County Counsel

U. S. House of Representatives

Select Committee on Aging

Washington, D.C. 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 226-3378

January 24, 1983

Dear Tony:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the letter and related material from your constituent, John Fiske, regarding the rights of seniors in California, and especially PSA-12, to participate directly in decision-making about programs authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA).

The issue raised by Mr. Fiske cuts to the very core of congressional intent in enacting the OAA. Was the OAA designed simply to serve the basic needs of the elderly, needs that are often defined by service-providers, or was it designed to empower the elderly to assist them to lead more independent, fulfilling lives? I believe very strongly, and I think I am joined by most of our colleagues in the Congress, that OAA programs should not foster dependence but rather should promote independence and self-determination.

For further clarification on this issue I would refer you to Title I of the OAA, which is the "bill of rights" of the Act and establishes the parameters within which all other Titles of the Act should be interpreted. In the original Act passed by the Congress in 1965, Title I stressed that one important objective for all OAA programs is to promote the "Freedom, independence and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives." The Act was amended in 1973 and a further clarification of Title I objectives was provided as follows: "to ensure that the planning and operation of such programs will be undertaken as a partnership of older citizens, community agencies and State and local governments with appropriate assistance from the Federal Government."

Based on the objectives spelled out in Title I, I would conclude the following:

- o any interpretation of the OAA that prohibits older Americans from enjoying the status of "constituency" either through their elected representatives or by direct vote denies them the exercise of individual initiative and is therefore in conflict with the spirit if not the letter of the objectives of the Act;
- o all citizens eligible to participate in OAA programs regardless of their age, race, sex or other characteristics, should be granted full voting rights in those decisions affecting their lives.

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PAUL SCHLEGEL
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Hon. Tony Coelho
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January 24, 1983

I appreciate your bringing this to my attention. I would like to keep abreast of developments on this issue so please keep me informed.

With warmest personal regards, and

Believe me,

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Claude Pepper".

Claude Pepper

The Honorable Tony Coelho
House of Representatives
403 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

CP/sma