



The Onorato Plan for Older Pennsylvanians

*Benefitting From the Contributions of Older Adults &
Ensuring That the State is Meeting Their Needs*

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have the third highest percentage of older residents in the nation. These citizens work hard to continue to contribute to the fabric of our Commonwealth's communities, and Dan Onorato understands that Pennsylvania depends on the expertise and dynamism of our older Americans. The issues facing Pennsylvania's older adults must be a priority for the next Governor. With experience running the state's second-largest county and serving its more than 200,000 residents over the age of 65, Onorato has the record of leadership that older adults can count on.

Dan Onorato recognizes and values the important role that older adults play in helping to strengthen and improve our communities. Pennsylvanians of all ages have long benefited from the tremendous resources that our older residents provide; they give their time and decades of experience to our neighborhoods, our schools and our local businesses. In the current economy, a significant number of older adults are taking on second careers. For others who are approaching retirement, community service is often a means to meaningfully contribute to the well-being of others. We must continue to support this "Greatest Generation" as they, in turn, support us.

The oldest of the Baby Boomers will turn 65 next year, and the number of Pennsylvanians age 85 and older is projected to grow by nearly 40 percent in the next two decades. Onorato will strive to improve the services and choices available to adults as they age. The majority of Pennsylvanians want to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. As Governor, Onorato will work to rebalance the long-term living system and support the entire continuum of care that older adults need.

A Proven Track Record

As Allegheny County Executive, Dan Onorato has a proven record of standing up for older adults and making sure that government is working on their behalf.

Onorato has enacted six consecutive budgets without ever raising property taxes, and he supported an increase in the amount of county-funded property tax relief by 50%. Throughout his tenure as County Executive, Onorato has fought against an unfair property tax reassessment that could drive older adults and other residents from their homes. When the court ordered this reassessment that would serve as a back-door property tax hike for many homeowners, Onorato fought it all the way to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Onorato has made Allegheny County the first county in Pennsylvania to offer a continuum of care to support the needs of older adults while ensuring maximum independence. His Kane Regional Center Action Plan restructured county services to expand independent living, assisted living and transitional care choices, while still providing skilled-nursing care to those who need it. Onorato also implemented the Allegheny County Link – one of the state’s first resource centers to streamline access to long-term living services and to provide reliable information to consumers who are seeking services and making long-term living decisions. And he has emphasized the importance of senior centers throughout Allegheny County’s communities.

A Vision for Pennsylvania’s Future

Dan Onorato will ensure that state government champions the needs of older adults and recognizes their contributions to strengthening our communities. As Governor, Onorato will:

1. Enhance the quality of life of adult as they age; and
2. Deliver quality services to older adults along the entire continuum of care.

Enhancing the quality of life of adults as they age

Older adults are vital and vibrant members of Pennsylvania communities. As Governor, Dan Onorato will:

- **Protect homeowners against skyrocketing property taxes.** Just as he did as Allegheny County Executive, Onorato will stop unfair reassessments by ensuring that assessment rules protect Pennsylvanians and are consistent and uniform. Onorato will insist on homeowner protections, and he will ensure that reassessment is never used as a tool for back-door property tax hikes or as a source of government windfalls. Onorato supports the Property Tax & Rent Rebate Program that is funded from the Pennsylvania Lottery and casino gaming, and he will expand outreach so that as many eligible older adults participate as possible. He will also make sure that the state pays its fair share of school funding in order to keep the burden off of local property taxpayers.
- **Increase opportunities for civic engagement and life-long learning.** Onorato will promote volunteerism and other opportunities for older adults to make a meaningful contribution to their communities while pursuing and expanding their interests. He will ensure that the Governor’s Office of Citizen Service – PennSERVE – works with groups that serve older adults, such as AARP’s “Create the Good” campaign and Experience Wave.
- **Help communities provide the services that older adults value and need.** Onorato supports the state’s public libraries, which serve as a key resource for many older adults, and recognizes the importance of public transportation services that enable older adults to have freedom of movement. He will also support strategies to ensure that communities are planning for the space and other resources that will be needed due to increased demand for home- and community-based care as the Boomers age.
- **Support caregivers who help meet the needs of older adults.** Aging adults increasingly rely on family and other caregivers to maintain their quality of life. Ensuring that these caregivers are supported is essential to the well-being of older adults and to the “sandwich generation” – the Pennsylvanians who are simultaneously raising children while helping their own parents as they age. Onorato supports the Pennsylvania Family Caregiver Support Act and he will champion efforts to modernize the law so that

it continues to meet the needs of older adults and their caregivers. He will also emphasize the importance of information and referral services so that families have the necessary tools while planning for their future. In addition, many older Pennsylvanians will need additional non-family care, and Onorato will work to ensure that the growing caregiving industry creates community-sustaining jobs.

- **Ensure consumer and financial protection.** The retirement security of Pennsylvanians depends on the state doing its part to prevent and detect financial abuse and in promoting effective consumer education designed to meet the specific needs of older adults. Onorato will ensure that his Administration fulfills this crucial responsibility.
- **Prevent elder abuse.** Research shows that there could be as many as five million victims of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation each year across the nation. Onorato supports the recently enacted federal Elder Justice Act. He will ensure that his Administration champions the law's implementation and that state agencies strenuously prevent elder abuse.
- **Address age discrimination.** Older adults are some of the most productive and experienced workers. Onorato will promote measures to educate against age discrimination and to recognize and stop it when it occurs.

Delivering quality services to older adults along the entire continuum of care

Dan Onorato understands that as the Boomer generation ages, there will be increased demand for the full spectrum of long-term living services and that state government must be effective, efficient and responsive in meeting this need – including by rebalancing long-term care and services and supporting the long-term living service network. As Governor, Onorato will:

- **Support Pennsylvania's successful prescription drug programs.** Onorato will ensure that the PACE and PACENET prescription drug programs continue to meet the needs of older adults on fixed incomes.
- **Ensure that older adults are receiving the benefits they've earned.** Onorato will emphasize the importance of outreach so that older adults can enroll in PACE and PACENET, as well as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and other programs.
- **Maximize the benefits and services that older adults receive through the Pennsylvania Lottery.** Onorato is proud that Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation that dedicates 100% of its Lottery proceeds to benefit older residents, and he believes that all Lottery proceeds should continue to be reserved for this purpose. He will ensure that the Lottery is run efficiently and creatively so that it generates more revenue for the important long-term living programs and services that rely on Lottery funding.
- **Ensure state Lottery support for home- and community-based care and work to eliminate waiting lists.** Onorato knows that most Pennsylvanians who need long-term care services prefer to stay in their homes and communities – and that doing so is also the most cost-effective option for taxpayers. Onorato will continue to rebalance the long-term living system and ensure state support of home- and community-based care so that people needing services can make the best choice for themselves and their family.
- **Support the senior centers that Pennsylvanians rely on.** Onorato recognizes the importance of the hundreds of senior centers that promote “active aging” in health and wellness, social and recreational activities, and educational programs. In addition to supporting their operation through Pennsylvania Lottery revenue, Onorato will work to

improve their infrastructure when possible through the state's capital budget and other capital programs.

- **Support the Area Agencies on Aging.** The AAA's provide an array of services such as legal, ombudsman and training and support for employment. They also efficiently manage scarce resources on behalf of consumers, and recruit volunteers to provide these services to older consumers. Onorato's Administration will support the AAA's and will work with them as valuable partners.
- **Recognize the role of nursing homes.** Even as the state expands its home- and community-based care services, nursing homes will always be an important component of the care continuum for Pennsylvanians with acute needs. Onorato will support state policies and incentives that ensure the quality of patient care and promote the efficient use of taxpayer resources.
- **Ensure that the direct care workforce is prepared to meet projected needs.** The increased demand for aging services will lead to an ever-greater need for skilled, reliable direct care workers, and Onorato will ensure that Pennsylvania's workforce development system meets this challenge.

DAN ONORATO: STANDING UP FOR OLDER PENNSYLVANIANS

Dan Onorato understands and respects the crucial role that older adults play in Pennsylvania. As Allegheny County Executive, he has made government work better on behalf of the older adults it serves. And as Governor, Onorato will champion the needs of older Pennsylvanians.