

LTC DISCUSSION GROUP: POST-ELECTION UPDATE

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INTRODUCTION

- **Title is making sense of the 2020 election--- for me, especially for White House, outcome makes total sense**
- **So in a year like 2020 you expected a normal election?**
 - **A three word description—like no other**
 - **We do appear to be clearer about the outcome then we were a few weeks ago**
 - **It appears that what will bring us back to normal is the not normal Electoral College**
 - **And even more appropriate that Donald Trump who never did that well in college will flunk out from that college before even starting a second semester**

WHO WON?

- **Beside Biden—who won—our democracy with the voter turnout in a most challenging year**
- **Kamala Harris and who would not want to have her political trajectory**
- **Blue wave? Not quite but at least get to wave bye to Trump**
- **Pollsters again proven wrong, but less wrong than last time**
 - **At the rate they are going pollsters will leap ahead of Congress as the most disparaged entity by the public**
- **House majority shrunk and still not sure by how much—one residual issue—might limit Biden's ability to choose Cabinet and other officials**
- **Have the progressives become the next Tea Party?**

THE SENATE

- **In the Senate—technically we wait until January 5 for final determination on majority**
- **If betting, I would say it stays with Rs, but like House a narrower majority**
- **Which may be prescription for gridlock—or might allow moderates from both sides to have outsize influence**
- **And two committees in particular promise to look a lot different –Crapo for Finance and who leads HELP?**

THE ADMINISTRATION

- **Returning to new Administration with transition officially underway—Cabinet and White House positions being chosen**
- **Experience and closeness to Biden look to be keys so far and also naming “firsts” to positions like Homeland Security and Treasury**
- **But confirmation? Hard to know—first real test might be Neera Tanden for OMB**
- **Of course of real interest to us will be HHS, including CMS, CDC, ACL, AHRQ, ASPE and so on**
- **Quick look at 2020 results so far—John wanted to look at 2022 but I am not that clairvoyant**

THE PANDEMIC

- **The pandemic is the issue that the new Administration and Congress will confront, and for how long?
Way more than first 100 days**
- **An all encompassing health and economic crisis**
- **Two top front and center issues: vaccine distribution and emergency funding**
- **Progress on vaccine front—Pfizer and Moderna filing for emergency authorization**
- **How many can be vaccinated in December—could be great for national morale**
- **Overriding goal—vaccine must be affordable, accessible and have the confidence of the public, especially persons of color and older adults**

CURRENT LEGISLATION

- **COVID-19 emergency legislation might precede Biden**
- **Opportunity may exist in lame duck**
- **Tied to omnibus or separate smaller targeted bill**
- **Biden first said he was ok with targeted then bigger later but staff rolled that comment back**
- **Most likely if targeted would be those items that expire on December 31, such as**
 - **Eviction moratorium, student loan relief, unemployment payment provisions**

WHAT'S IN HEROES 2.0?

- **Includes \$2.2 trillion in relief funding**
- **\$1.175 billion for ACL, including Older Americans Act programs (\$500 million for nutrition)**
- **\$436 billion to state and local governments**
- **Increases SNAP benefit by 15 percent; \$450 million to food banks**
- **\$500 million for nursing home strike teams**
- **Emergency rental assistance and further moratorium on evictions**

IN THE END

- **Goal of advocates is to get as much as we can into either the omnibus or emergency bill**
- **And one aging issue that might emerge from omnibus or COVID legislation—a short term renewal of the Elder Justice Act**
- **And one extra note on pandemic: in a briefing I got as an AARP board member, the number one issue of our members is the pandemic**

LONG-TERM CARE AGENDA

- **And obviously in deference to this group, President-elect Biden has a plan for long term care, which includes:**
 - **Increasing the tax deduction for LTCI**
 - **An LTSS innovation fund to help states expand HCBS**
 - **Eliminate waiting lists under Medicaid for LTSS with enhanced federal match**
 - **And would improve nursing home staffing and quality standards**
- **So need to become the long term care advocacy group—now you have an agenda to work for and build on...**

OTHER AGING ISSUES

- **Other aging issues we can look forward to based on election results**
- **Action on Medicare**
 - **On one hand, solvency challenge growing more imminent**
 - **While on other hand, efforts to broaden Medicare: Medicare for All or Medicare for More?**
- **Medicare for all not going to happen, but lowering to 60 might**
- **And expanded benefits to include dental, vision and hearing**

ISSUES IN A BROADER CONTEXT

- **Health equity**
 - **A centerpiece of Biden-Harris going forward—deeper dive into disparities with focus on older adults who have endured longer durations**
- **Caregiving as a cross generational issue**
 - **Feature piece a tax credit for family caregivers**
- **Focus on social isolation**
 - **Again, a cross generational issue but impact on older adults is distinct. Coupled with greater investment in public health, perhaps work toward declaring social isolation a public health emergency?**

OTHER AGING ISSUES

- **Social determinants of health: a lot more attention being paid as a result of pandemic. Need to do inventory of existing programs that address SODH, better coordinate the approach and provide sufficient resources**
- **Nutrition security: another cross generational issue but with distinct importance to older adults. Bolster SNAP funding and improve eligibility, continue strong emergency funding for OAA nutrition programs, implement provision in 2020 OAA on malnutrition screening**
- **And elder justice: Biden and Harris have strong positions on many aspects, including reauthorizing the EJA and promoting better safety and care in long-term care facilities**

CONCLUSIONS

- **While there is growing excitement about the new Administration, the real hope for many Americans is that we can return to a period of calm**
- **Turn the corner on the pandemic, stimulate the economy to prevent deeper pandemic consequences, confront tough issues around racial justice and equity, trust all science including and especially social science in future policies**
- **And finally, one piece of advice to the President-elect:**
- **Get a dog walker!**