To the editor:

May is Older Americans Month, the annual celebration that recognizes the countless contributions of older adults to our communities and strengthens our commitment to support them. As May comes to a close, I cannot think of a more fitting opportunity to show our support of older Ohioans in 2023 than through the state’s budget bill.

As a nonprofit, mission-driven provider of quality [ services ] to residents in [ city ], we support our [ residents/clients ] every day as they live the theme of this year’s observance “aging unbound.” Our organization supports residents as they pursue [ give examples: art, travel, learning, teaching, performing ].

In our state there are more than 2,046,320 adults over age 65, the sixth largest in the nation, with 8.3% living below the poverty line. The number of older Americans is expected to double come 2030, and many of Ohio’s counties already count more seniors than children. Many of these seniors will need some level of care and support. That’s why we need the Ohio Senate to safeguard historic investments to support aging Ohioans in the state’s budget.

Years of flat funding plus the recent pandemic and drastic inflation has hindered workforce development and forced facilities to cut services to remain solvent or close their doors altogether. We need passionate healthcare workers who are paid fairly, and we need facilities that provide services, care and resources for seniors to remain open. The necessary investments in the budget will support workers and facilities through increased wages for home- and community-based direct care workers and adjusted reimbursements for long-term care facilities to cover the actual cost of quality care. These investments make it possible for Ohio’s seniors to age with confidence, knowing there will be resources, services and help for them down the road. Is there a better way to age unbound?

Sincerely,

*Note: Word count varies among publications. LAO staff will edit the final draft and submit on your behalf.*