



Generations United's Public Policy Priorities for the 115th Congress

Together... *We are wiser*
Our lives are improved
We cooperate for a stronger America
We are Generations United

Generations United identifies, promotes, and advocates the following legislative priorities for the 115th Congress:

Leadership

Generations United will take a leadership role in the first tier priorities. Issues in this category will receive the highest possible attention where appropriate and feasible. We will advocate for these priorities before Congress and the Administration, organize and participate in Hill visits and other public education activities, initiate sign-on letters and host briefings. Generations United's leadership priorities are:

- **Grandfamilies:** Improve policies to help children, youth, grandparents and other relative caregivers in grandfamilies receive the information, support and services they need to ensure the children thrive.
 - Improving child welfare systems to better serve grandfamilies involved with the child welfare system, such as by prioritizing placement of children with relatives, addressing barriers to licensing relatives and ensuring those children and caregivers in grandfamilies have access to the same level of supports and services as non-related foster parents.
 - Increasing availability and access to supports and services for grandfamilies raising children outside of the formal foster care system such as: kinship navigators programs, affordable health care, mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment services, food and nutrition, financial assistance, and respite care.

Partnership

These are areas in which Generations United will partner with coalitions and leverage our networks to achieve our goals. We will monitor legislation, and offer intergenerational language and communication tools for our membership and networks to use in their advocacy efforts on these issues. As resources permit, we will conduct additional advocacy activities such as conducting legislative visits, co-sponsoring briefings and promoting sign-on letters. Generations United's partnership priorities are:

- **Social Services Block Grant:** Protect the Social Services Block Grant Program and improve the program by making a portion of the funds accessible to Native American and Alaska Native Tribes and including support to states to develop and implement plans to evaluate program impact.
- **Health Care:** Protect basic health coverage for children, youth and older adults by ensuring that any repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is accompanied by the passage of a full and immediate replacement that meets the need of children, their families and older adults. Policy changes that eliminate or reduce the health coverage of family members, caregivers and neighbors negatively impact the children, older adults and people with disabilities that they live with, support and care for. Any policy changes to health coverage must adopt key protection principles for child, youth and older adult beneficiaries including:
 - A “do no harm” standard preventing structural changes to the ACA that would negatively impact the comprehensive and affordable coverage provided to children and older adults
 - A commitment to protect against changes to Medicaid’s financing structure that would end Medicaid’s guarantee of affordable, comprehensive health coverage for children with disabilities, poor and low-income children and older adults.
 - A commitment to protect core Medicare benefits
 - Assurances that additional health care costs from changes to the ACA will not be shifted onto Medicare, Medicaid or other low-income health care program beneficiaries.
- **Social Security:** Protect and improve the adequacy of Social Security so it continues to meet its obligations to current and future beneficiaries, including the more than 30 percent who are under 65 and receive disability and/or survivors’ benefits and its coverage of 98 percent of all children in the U.S. in the event of the death or disability of a caregiver.
- **Hunger and Nutrition:** Protect and strengthen proven hunger and nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and promote innovative intergenerational approaches to meeting hunger needs such as those in shared sites where children and seniors interact and share resources.

Support

Generations United will support these issues by signing onto relevant letters and sharing information with our networks through policy alerts, social media and other communications.

- **Tax and Budget Issues:** Ensure appropriate funding is not reduced and federal and state tax and budget policies provide sufficient revenues to maintain crucial programs for all generations, including those that promote health security and well-being, retirement savings, sustainable Medicare and Social Security, quality early childhood education and child care and positive youth development.

Generations United will support additional priorities approved by Generations United public policy protocol, which is guided by the intergenerational policy principles and Generations United's public policy committee, board of directors and policy staff.

About Generations United Public Policy Agenda

Generations United's policy work is designed to engage advocates for children, youth and older adults as joint partners in improving the lifetime well-being of all people. Generations United and our members recognize that older adults, people with disabilities and children do not live in silos. They are interdependent. They live in families, neighborhoods and communities. Policy changes that eliminate or reduce critical benefits, supports and services of family members, caregivers and neighbors negatively impact the children, youth, older adults and people with disabilities that they live with, support and care for. Likewise, smart investments in people of one generation reap benefits for those in other generations in the form of a stronger workforce and by ensuring quality of life and well-being. They will make America more competitive and help achieve fiscal sustainability. If we neglect thoughtful investments across the lifespan and abandon support for the growing interdependence of generations, we risk failure in the form of wasteful spending, increased public divisiveness and policies injurious to American families and communities.

While we continue to address immediate challenges and lay the groundwork for long-term stability we must engage in a respective and ongoing discussion about the changing demographics of our nation. As the baby boomer generation ages and as new immigrant and racial/ethnic minority populations grow, we must continue to ensure that we support our most vulnerable populations- regardless of their age or background. Programs and opportunities to foster intergenerational cross-cultural contacts will promote better understanding across the demographic spectrums, as well as provide tangible benefits for our nation's ability to care for and protect all of its people.

Generations United uses the following principles to guide our work and assess the intergenerational impact of legislation. Although Generations United supports a wide range of policies that are consistent with the intergenerational approach, we work to carefully limit our focus to those areas that are distinctly intergenerational, timely, and/or in clear need of leadership. While this agenda was created to represent current key intergenerational issues of concern to Generations United members, we maintain the flexibility to respond to key issues as they arise over time.

Intergenerational Policymaking Principles

- Make lifetime well-being for all the highest priority.
- Consider the impact of every action on each generation.
- Unite rather than divide the generations for the greatest social and financial impact.
- Recognize and support every generation's ability to contribute to the well-being of their families and communities.

Corresponding to the principles, ***a model intergenerational law or policy*** would also:

- Use innovative or proven approaches to improve lifetime well-being for all generations.
- Include an assessment of both short- and long-term impacts on each generation and demonstrate benefits for multiple ages.
- Actively promote innovative and proven strategies to unite two or more generations.
- Actively promote innovative and proven strategies to support and engage every generation's ability to contribute to the well-being of their families and communities.
- Promote the interdependence of the generations.
- Encourage intergenerational transfers through shared care or services.
- Be sensitive to intergenerational family structures (e.g., grandparents who are raising grandchildren).

Consistent with the outlined principles and priorities, Generations United will: 1) advocate directly for federal and state policies and programs that meet the needs of children, youth and older adults and 2) provide information and tools to engage Generations United's broad and diverse membership to protect and prioritize critical investments that build toward a more stable and secure future for all generations. Generations United encourages policymakers, our members and networks and other advocates to use the principles and the priorities in this agenda to guide their work. Additional talking points, policy briefs, [an intergenerational legislation impact assessment tool](#) and other resources can be found at www.gu.org.

About Generations United

For more than three decades, Generations United has been the catalyst for policies and practices stimulating cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged.

Our Mission:

To improve the lives of children, youth and older people through intergenerational collaboration, public policies and programs for the enduring benefit of all.

Our Vision:

A world that values and engages all generations.

Core Beliefs:

Generations United is the catalyst that brings single-age focused groups together to build and support a common agenda while providing a unique voice in public debate. Generations United honors all ages, supports all ages and engages all ages. Further, we believe:

- Intergenerational collaboration unites and improves our communities
- Intergenerational approaches have a positive relationship to economic growth and value creation
- Public policy should meet the needs of all generations
- Resources are more wisely used when they connect the generations rather than separate them
- Discrimination, in any form, limits a person's potential to contribute to the development of their community
- Grandparents and other adults who step forward to raise children are keeping families together and providing an economic service to our country