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Governor Ted Strickland's recently ordered an end to Ohio's waiting list for PASSPORT and other in-home and community services deserves support from every Ohioan. Now, the 592 older adults currently on the waiting list will be able to access the long-term care they need.

But, eliminating the waiting period does not diminish the need for legislation currently under consideration in the Ohio General Assembly. Called Home First, the legislation would extend Home First to older adults leaving hospitals or in abusive and self-neglect situations, as well as those who have depleted their assets in assisted living, or whose physicians have signed that they are at risk of nursing facility placement within 30 days.

Older adults who need help have often been subjected to waiting lists. They need alternatives when they would prefer to live at home with some assistance but nursing facility placement is their only option.

Senate Bill 214 passed the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee by a unanimous vote of 11-0. House Bill 398 is being considered in the House Aging and Disability Services Committee. Both bills have widespread bipartisan support.

AAA8 is pleased the Governor is also supporting this Home First legislation and hope the Ohio General Assembly will enact Home First into law to keep older adults from unnecessary and expensive nursing home placement in the future. These steps help Ohio achieve a Unified Long Term Care System that will provide better care at lower cost for all our citizens who need long term care.