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**Focusing on Older Americans:
An Introduction to the Older Americans Act**

by Shannon Laymon-Pecoraro, Esq.

In 1965, the Older Americans Act was passed to promote community service programs for seniors. Considered to be the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social services for seniors, the Older Americans Act was last reauthorized in 2006 and expired at the end of fiscal year 2011. The support for the Older Americans Act has diminished as a result of funding concerns necessary to provide services to an increasing older population. On January 20, 2015 Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee introduced a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965. The bill, in addition to other things, would provide additional funding to assist our older Americans.

The Older Americans Act of 1965 consists of seven titles. Perhaps the two most important titles to our clients are Title III, which provides grants for States and Community Programs on Aging, thus promoting supportive services such as case management, senior center services, transportation programs, home delivery and congregate meal programs, in-home services, family caregiver support, and health promotion and disease prevention services, and Title V, which authorizes a program to provide support for part-time employment for select individuals 55 and over.

The introduction of the Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2015 focuses on many initiatives. The current bill not only promotes the modernization of facilities for seniors, but also focuses on the delivery of evidence-based programs and an increase in protection of vulnerable persons. Another significant change in the current bill includes an amendment to the funding formula, whereby funding would be based on fiscal year changes in the number of a state's population of individuals aged 60 and older relative to all states.

Not only has funding for the Older Americans Act not kept up with inflation and demand, but budget cuts have also depleted necessary funds and limited service availability to those in need. As the baby boomer population ages, services for older Americans will increase in necessity. In preparation for such increased need in services, it is important to ensure that programs are in place to promote the health, safety, security, and independence of our older population. Hook Law Center will continue to monitor the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and analyze its impact on our clients.



Zebra Stripes

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, why do zebras have stripes?

Kit Kat: Another excellent question with an unexpected answer. Actually, there have been many theories as to why zebras have stripes. Two of the leading explanations are the stripes help to cool the zebra and that stripes help prevent bites from disease-carrying insects. Not all scientists agree. Some think both explanations are true, and others prefer one explanation to the exclusion of the other.

What we do have, though, is some new research which validates the theory of thermoregulation--that stripes help to lower the zebra's body temperature. Researchers at UCLA noticed that zebras in central Africa have more defined stripes than their cousins living in cooler, mostly southern, areas of Africa. Why don't other animals have stripes? After all, there are many other large animals in these regions that don't have stripes. The scientists think it is because the zebra needs to graze for longer periods to get sufficient food intake. Therefore, they are exposed to direct sun for longer periods and have greater need for a cooling mechanism. They need to do more research to validate their observations.

Other scientists, like Tim Caro, of Univ. of California, Davis, disagree with the theory of thermoregulation. According to him, the dark hair is '...kind of the last color that you would want' to keep cool. He thinks that the stripes serve the function of discouraging insects from biting the zebra's legs. It has been observed that insects have problems identifying striped surfaces, though scientists are not sure why. More research seems likely to resolve these issues.

(Laura Poppick, "New Research Links Zebras' Stripes to Temperatures," www.accuweather.com, 1-16-15) or (http://www.accuweather.com/en/features/trend/why_do_zebras_have_stripes_new/40659117)

Upcoming Events

- **February 20-21, 2015** – Andrew Hook will be speaking on Managing a Small Law Firm at the 2015 VAELA UnProgram in Charlottesville, VA.
- **February 23, 2015** - Andrew H. Hook and Shannon Laymon-Pecoraro will be speaking on the ABLE Act to a local financial advisor firm.
- **February 24 and 27, 2015** – Hook Law Center is announcing the HLC Monthly Seminar Series beginning this month with **Tax Return Tips for Seniors and Their Families**. The seminar is scheduled at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 in HLC's Harbour View office, 5806 Harbour View Blvd, Suffolk, VA OR Friday, February 27, 2015 in HLC's Virginia Beach office, 295 Bendix Road, Virginia Beach, VA. Space is limited!!! To reserve your seat, please call 757-399-7506 and ask for Debbie.

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