



SCR-153 Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month. (2023-2024)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 153

CHAPTER 146

Relative to Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

[Approved by Governor July 03, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State July 03, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 153, Dodd. Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim and acknowledge the month of June 2024, and every June thereafter, as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in California and would reiterate the importance of annually recognizing Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in the state.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The population of Californians over 60 years of age is expected to increase 166 percent during the period from 2010 to 2060, inclusive, with more than one-half of the counties seeing a 100-percent increase in this age group; and

WHEREAS, Research by the National Institute of Justice found that 11 percent of older adults reported experiencing at least one form of mistreatment in the past year, including emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that only 1 in 24 incidents are reported and fewer than 15 percent of those harmed access formal support services each year; and

WHEREAS, Many victims of abuse fail to report out of fear of losing their relationships with those harming them, shame that someone they trust mistreated them, or distrust of the police and agencies charged to help them; and

WHEREAS, Elder and dependent adult abuse knows no boundaries with respect to the gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, or economic, educational, or social status of the victim; and

WHEREAS, Financial abuse ranked first among the types of abuse reported to adult protective services during 2022–23, with nearly 75,000 reports received; and

WHEREAS, According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center, over 101,000 victims above 60 years of age reported scam-related losses equaling \$3,400,000,000 in 2023, a 100-percent increase from 2021; and

WHEREAS, Older and dependent adult victims of financial abuse suffer increased negative health outcomes, stress-related health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure, along with financial insecurity; and

WHEREAS, Elder and dependent adult victims of financial abuse have triple the mortality rates of nonabused individuals, often with declines in physical and mental health from an inability to afford rent or food, loss of self-efficacy, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Victims of financial abuse, regardless of their socioeconomic status or communication abilities, often face significant barriers to accessing help. Even affluent older adults may struggle due to the lack of culturally tailored services, shame, and limited law enforcement resources. Those with cognitive impairments, communication challenges, or low literacy levels encounter additional obstacles in seeking assistance and navigating legal systems. Older adults and individuals with disabilities may doubt their ability to protect themselves, communicate effectively, or testify against abusers; and

WHEREAS, Factors that place older Californians at risk for abuse include cognitive and physical decline, financial vulnerability, physical dependency on others, isolation, and loneliness, as well as a lack of access to preventive services like estate planning, daily money management, affordable supported housing, and assistance with decisionmaking; and

WHEREAS, One in every nine individuals over 65 years of age is living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, 20 to 25 percent, inclusive, of the older adult population experience mild cognitive impairment, and one in two people with dementia experience some form of abuse by others; and

WHEREAS, Subtle indicators that abuse may be occurring include bruises or pressure marks, unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a change in alertness, unusual depression, sudden changes in financial situations, strained or tense relationships, or frequent arguments; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing these signs is the first step toward the prevention of elder and dependent adult abuse; and

WHEREAS, Preventing elder and dependent abuse reduces suffering and potentially lessens the burden on the health system and the social services system; and

WHEREAS, All older adults and persons with disabilities have the right to live safely in the least restrictive environment, whether in their homes or in health care facilities, and to enjoy an optimum quality of life while being protected from all forms of injustice; and

WHEREAS, Private citizens and public agencies must work to combat crime and violence against older adults and adults with disabilities by identifying and preventing the social isolation of older adults through the expansion and resourcing of home- and community-based long-term support and services programs, by increasing training of law enforcement, increasing public awareness, and expanding social service programs; and

WHEREAS, Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in California aligns with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, first established in 2006 and observed on June 15 every year and created to promote a better understanding of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic issues associated with abuse around the globe; and

WHEREAS, On June 10, 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order No. N-14-19, calling for the development of a 10-year Master Plan for Aging (MPA) to serve as a blueprint for state government, local government, the private sector, and philanthropy to prepare the state for the coming demographic changes and continue California's leadership in aging, disability, and equity; and

WHEREAS, Goal 3 of the MPA, "Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation," resulted in the establishment of the California Elder and Disability Justice Coordinating Council, which brings together agency representatives and stakeholders working to strengthen the system of services for older adults and dependent adult victims of abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, All Californians are strongly encouraged to report suspected abuse of an elder or dependent adult by calling their local adult protective services agency, local Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, law enforcement, or emergency services agencies; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature proclaims and acknowledges the month of June 2024, and every June thereafter, as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month and reiterates the importance of annually recognizing Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in the state; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.