

Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act

Our nation's seniors spent their lives working to provide a better future for their families, serving in our nation's military, and aiding in the improvement of our nation as a whole. Seniors have earned the right to spend their golden years in security. It is the duty of our nation to ensure the safety and security of our seniors by preventing elder abuse. The Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act will strengthen definitions of elder abuse and providing federal assistance to actively prevent elder abuse.

Strengthening Federal Standards for Elder Abuse:

The Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act aims to strengthen the federal definitions for elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, by streamlining the definitions for elder abuse between the Elder Justice Act and the Older Americans Act (OAA). The Act also defines Adult Protective Services (APS) in the Older Americans Act, the only victim services resource for adults with the authority to act on reports of abuse. The bill defines financial exploitation as it relates to the OAA, and adds victims or alleged victims of abuse and exploitation to a list of conditions eligible for priority for social services under the OAA.

Improving Coordination of all Elder Justice Activities:

Under the bill, the appropriate training and prevention and provision of elder justice throughout the OAA Programs will be routinely updated as necessary and will see full integration of elder justice activities with all social service programs under the Act.

Authorizing the National Adult Protective Services Resource Center:

The bill codifies the National Adult Protective Resources Center in the Administration on Community Living, and expands both its guidance and responsibilities to states.

Develop Efficient Elder Abuse Screening Practices:

The bill directs the National Adult Protective Resources Center to support states in the development of best practices to incorporate elder abuse screening into health and wellness services. The bill further requires the research center to study and disseminate this information to states regularly.

State Prevention, Assessment, and Response to Elder Abuse:

By incorporating elder abuse prevention training, screenings, and reporting protocol into all senior service access points receiving federal dollars under this bill. This will also include state and local area plans for aging.

Improvement of the Training for Elder Justice Activities:

The bill integrates the research and replication of successful models of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation prevention and training into the Older Individuals' Protection from Violence Projects. The bill also strengthens Elder Justice sensitivity training requirements.

Strengthen Protections Against Elder Abuse

Endorsed by: *Alliance for Retired Americans, Alzheimer's Foundation of America, American Society on Aging, Elder Justice Coalition, LeadingAge, National Council on Aging, Senior Citizens League*

July 24, 2013

Dear Colleague,

I invite you to cosponsor the Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act of 2013, a bill that will strengthen federal guidance and resources for states to prevent and respond to cases of elder abuse.

Every year, an estimated 14.1% of all non-institutionalized older adults have experiences of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. Yet, for every case reported, another 23 cases of abuse go unnoticed.

To address this gap, The Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act amends the existing structure of the Older Americans Act (OAA) to provide for better incorporation of elder justice activities into senior services and state planning. Specifically, this legislation strengthens the definitions for elder abuse, neglect and elder justice, and defines senior financial exploitation and adult protective services for the first time in OAA. Additionally, this bill would require all states to incorporate standardized elder abuse screening and reporting protocols into their state and area plans on aging. While nearly all states have mandatory reporting laws, without a plan for integration of screening and reporting, thousands of cases are missed every year.

Adult Protective Services (APS) programs are the primary response system for cases of elder abuse, and are established in every state by statute. Yet, the Government Accountability Office found in a March 2, 2001 report on APS programs¹ that the limited availability of these cases; all states reported that APS programs would benefit from additional guidance tailored to APS needs. This legislation would provide state APS resource center and tasking it with studying and disseminating best practices for incorporating elder abuse screenings into senior service programs.

The Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act has been endorsed by the Elder Justice Coalition, the National Adult Protective Services Association, and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging as a commonsense response to provide the coordination and resources states need to rapidly respond to all cases of elder abuse.

I urge you to join with us against those who perpetrate abuse on our seniors, and cosponsor the Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act. For more questions or to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Mae Stevens in Congressman Cartwright's office at: mae.stevens@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

¹ Government Accountability Office. Elder Justice: Stronger Federal Leadership Could Help Improve Response to Elder Abuse. Testimony before the Special Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate, March 2, 2011

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress