

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 295

Designating June 15, 2021, as “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day” and the month of June as “Elder Abuse Awareness Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 24, 2021

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating June 15, 2021, as “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day” and the month of June as “Elder Abuse Awareness Month”.

Whereas, in 2021, approximately 55,000,000 residents of the United States, or about 1 in every 6 individuals, have attained the age of 65;

Whereas elder abuse remains a challenging problem and can come in many different forms, often manifesting as physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, and social media abuse;

Whereas elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation have no boundaries and cross all racial, social, class, gender, and geographic lines, according to the Elder Justice Coalition;

Whereas more than 1 in 10 individuals in the United States over the age of 60 have been subjected to abuse each year, with many such victims enduring abuse in multiple forms, according to the American Journal of Public Health;

Whereas most reported cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults take place within private homes, and approximately 90 percent of the perpetrators in elder financial exploitation cases are family members or other trusted individuals, according to the National Adult Protective Services Association;

Whereas research suggests that elderly individuals in the United States who experience cognitive impairment, physical disabilities, or isolation are more likely to become the victims of abuse than those who do not experience cognitive impairment, physical disabilities, or isolation;

Whereas other risk factors for elder abuse can include low social support, poor physical health, and experience of previous traumatic events, according to the National Center on Elder Abuse;

Whereas close to half of elderly individuals who suffer from dementia will experience abuse during their lifetime, according to the Department of Justice;

Whereas only a small fraction of elder abuse cases are reported to the authorities;

Whereas, on June 15, 2021, which was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the United States mourned the loss of a disturbing number of older people in the United States, who perished in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities during the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas, the COVID–19 pandemic also has led to the emergence of new scams against older adults, including those related to vaccines;

Whereas, there has been an increase in hate crimes committed against older, Asian Americans during the COVID–19 pandemic;

Whereas, Congress recently passed and the President signed 2 measures that make nearly \$400,000,000 available for implementation of Elder Justice Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i–3a et seq.) initiatives, the largest funding stream related to such initiatives in the history of the Act; and

Whereas Congress, in passing the Elder Justice Act of 2009 (42 U.S.C. 1395i–3a et seq.), the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act (34 U.S.C. 21701 et seq.), the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–2), and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260), recognized the importance of protecting older people of the United States against abuse and exploitation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates June 15, 2021, as “World Elder
3 Abuse Awareness Day” and the month of June as
4 “Elder Abuse Awareness Month”;

5 (2) recognizes—

6 (A) judges, lawyers, adult protective serv-
7 ices professionals, law enforcement officers, so-
8 cial workers, health care providers, advocates
9 for victims, and other professionals and agen-

1 cies for their efforts to advance awareness of
2 elder abuse;

3 (B) the important work of the Elder Jus-
4 tice Coordinating Council, which has continued
5 through the previous 2 Administrations and in-
6 volves 14 different Federal agencies;

7 (C) the essential work done by adult pro-
8 tective services personnel, who regularly came
9 to the assistance of victims, investigated reports
10 of abuse, and actively prevented future victim-
11 ization of older people in the United States, es-
12 pecially during the ongoing COVID-19 pan-
13 demic as the social isolation of elderly individ-
14 uals due to stay-at-home orders only increased
15 the risk of abuse and neglect; and

16 (D) the importance of supporting State
17 long-term care ombudsman programs, which
18 help prevent elder abuse and neglect in nursing
19 homes and other long-term care facilities, where
20 infection prevention and control deficiencies
21 pose persistent challenges;

22 (3) applauds the work of the Elder Justice Coa-
23 lition, and its members, whose efforts to increase
24 public awareness of elder abuse have the potential to
25 increase the identification and reporting of this

1 crime by the public, professionals, and victims, and
2 can act as a catalyst to promote issue-based edu-
3 cation and long-term prevention; and

4 (4) encourages—

5 (A) members of the public and profes-
6 sionals who work with older adults to act as
7 catalysts to promote awareness and long-term
8 prevention of elder abuse—

9 (i) by reaching out to local adult pro-
10 tective services agencies, State long-term
11 care ombudsman programs, and the Na-
12 tional Center on Elder Abuse; and

13 (ii) by learning to recognize, detect,
14 report, and respond to elder abuse;

15 (B) private individuals and public agencies
16 in the United States to continue work together
17 at the Federal, State, and local levels to combat
18 abuse, neglect, exploitation, crime, and violence
19 against vulnerable adults, including vulnerable
20 older adults, particularly in light of limited re-
21 sources for vital protective services; and

22 (C) those Federal agencies with responsi-
23 bility for preventing elder abuse to fully exercise
24 such responsibilities to protect older adults,

- 1 whether living in the community or in long-term
- 2 care facilities.

