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April 4, 2006

Honorable Arlen Specter
Chair
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Specter and Leahy:

I am writing to you on behalf of the American Bar Association regarding S. 2010, the "Elder Justice Act." The Senate Judiciary Committee has before it a tremendous opportunity to address in a strong bipartisan way the inexcusable and growing national problem of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation – a domestic and institutional tragedy that causes serious harm to between 500,000 and 5 million individuals each year. The "Elder Justice Act" is currently pending in the Judiciary Committee awaiting hearings and mark-up. The American Bar Association strongly supports enactment of this legislation. We understand that until the Judiciary Committee acts, other committees of jurisdiction will not consider this bill. Accordingly, the ABA urges your Committee to schedule a mark-up session on the legislation in the near future. We make this request with the knowledge that versions of the current bill were reported out of Committee in the 108th Congress by the Finance Committee (S. 333) and the HELP Committee (S. 2940).

No current Federal law adequately and comprehensively addresses issues of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and there are very limited resources available to those in the field directly dealing with these issues. S. 2010 was introduced by Judiciary Committee and Finance Committee member Senator Orrin Hatch and co-sponsored by Judiciary Committee member Senator Herb Kohl and Finance Committee members Senators Blanche Lincoln and Gordon Smith. The legislation would create the infrastructure, and provide the resources needed to develop and implement a nationally coordinated strategy in collaboration with the states to make elder justice a reality. As elder

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justice is central to any viable notion of the rule of law and social justice, ABA policy “supports efforts to improve the response of the federal, state, territorial and local governments and of the criminal and civil justice systems to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation” through, among other things, the creation of “a nationwide structure for raising public awareness; supporting research, training and technical assistance; funding critical services; and coordinating local, territorial, state, and national resources.” Enactment of the “Elder Justice Act” can make that goal a reality, and the Judiciary Committee has the opportunity to take the first decisive step in shepherding the “Elder Justice Act” toward its enactment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert D. Evans". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Robert D. Evans