

Thomas M. Susman
Director
Governmental Affairs Office

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW - Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 662-1760
FAX: (202) 662-1762

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Grassley and Senator Blumenthal:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, with over 400,000 members worldwide, I write in regard to S. 3270, the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act. The ABA strongly supports your efforts to curb elder abuse, and we commend you for your action to move this bipartisan legislation through the committee.

Elder abuse—encompassing physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation—is a problem that respects no boundaries. It is not defined by socio-economic, racial, or ethnic status, and it occurs with alarming frequency in your states as well as all others. According to the 2010 National Elder Mistreatment Study, an estimated five million elders are victims of abuse in America each year. This number is surprisingly large. Yet, it also is undoubtedly low because the study did not include persons who lacked the capacity to participate in it or residents of nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, populations that are known to be especially vulnerable to elder abuse. The MetLife Mature Market Institute's 2011 study of financial exploitation found that older victims lose an estimated \$2.9 billion per year to financial exploitation, and medical costs associated with elder abuse exceed \$5 billion annually.

Emphasizing that improvements in efforts to prevent and redress elder abuse are central to any viable notion of the rule of law and social justice, the ABA is urging the Senate Judiciary Committee to approve S. 3270 during tomorrow's markup. The bill would establish needed federal infrastructure within the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to support prosecution of elder abuse cases; raise public awareness through outreach efforts; ensure collection of important data about cases and victims; facilitate effective interagency coordination; support efforts to improve guardianship proceedings and detect and redress abuse by guardians; and require the provision of training and technical assistance to state and local governments on preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and remedying elder abuse. These are goals supported by ABA policies dating back decades.

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Updated resources are constantly needed to combat new ways of abusing older persons. S. 3270, designed to create a federal infrastructure and support for efforts to better understand, prevent, and combat elder abuse, constitutes a sound investment in the health, dignity, and economic future of our nation.

We appreciate your leadership on these critical issues and thank you for considering the ABA's views on this important legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 662-1765 or thomas.susman@americanbar.org, or David Eppstein at (202) 662-1766 or david.eppstein@americanbar.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas M. Susman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas M. Susman