



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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Joint Committee On Ways And Means

Sub-Committee On Public Safety

Via Email to WaysandMeans.PublicSafetySub@state.or.us

I am writing in support of the Oregon Department of Justice's proposal to create an Elder Abuse Resource Prosecutor.

I review adult abuse reports every day and can substantiate the need for a dedicated prosecutor to attend to these cases. Elder abuse occurs both in licensed care settings and in the community at large. Elder abuse in any form is of great concern to our agency.

The Elder Abuse Resource Prosecutor will work together with prosecutors, law enforcement and community partners to improve the prosecution of these often extremely difficult cases. The Elder Abuse Resource Prosecutor will have three primary responsibilities: Training, technical assistance and outreach.

Funding the proposal to create an Elder Abuse Resource Prosecutor is important and necessary. Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In Oregon nearly 30,000 reports of potential abuse were made in 2013. And that's only part of the picture: Experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect reported, as many as five cases go unreported.

Unfortunately, the dynamics of elder abuse create multiple challenges for prosecutors. Most cases involve the victimization of older adults by perpetrators with whom they have an ongoing and trusting relationship. Because they so often trust and depend on the perpetrator, victims may be slow to recognize and report abuse and reluctant to cooperate with criminal justice professionals.

Please vote to support funding the proposal to create an Elder Abuse Resource Prosecutor. Thank you for your attention to this very important issue.

Sincerely,

David R. Berger

Interim State Long-Term Care Ombudsman