

**CCoA**  
California Commission on Aging

# AGEWATCH

*Special*

*Elder Abuse Awareness Month Edition*



## KNOW ABUSE REPORT ABUSE

### ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

**June is Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in California.** This special edition of AgeWatch will focus on activities across the state to increase awareness and promote efforts to prevent the abuse of vulnerable adults. Together with our partners, the [California Elder Justice Coalition](#), [C4A](#) (California Association of Area Agencies on Aging), the [California Department of Social Services](#) (CDSS), the [California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association](#), the [State Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#), the [California Commission on Aging](#) urges all Californians to learn the signs of elder and dependent adult abuse and to report it.

A toolkit of Elder Abuse Awareness Month materials is available for use throughout the month of June and beyond on the [C4A](#) website. Developed and made available by C4A, the toolkit includes customizable materials including news releases, public service announcements, social media content, and more. The toolkit can be accessed through the C4A website [here](#).



Members of the Elder Abuse Awareness Month Kick-off planning group celebrated a successful event.

AGEWATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834. (916) 419-7591

[www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov)

## Bipartisan Elder Justice Caucus Established in the House of Representatives;

### Founding members introduce Legislation to Reauthorize Elder Justice Act

Congressional Representatives Peter King (R-NY) and Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) have announced the establishment of a bipartisan Elder Justice Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives. According to an announcement on Rep. Bonamici's website, "the Caucus will help to unify a voice in Congress by bringing together members with a shared interest in preventing abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. It is estimated that victims of financial abuse lose at least \$2.9 billion each year. By 2060, there will be more than 98 million seniors – more than double the current senior population. With this unprecedented growth, it is critical that Congress work to protect seniors."

Along with establishing the new Caucus, the co-chairs have also introduced H.R. 2639, the Elder Justice Reauthorization Act, to extend through 2021 the Elder Justice Act (EJA) of 2009 that authorized the establishment and coordination of federal resources to protect seniors from elder abuse. Originally passed as part of the Affordable Care Act, the EJA was responsible for creating the federal Elder Justice Coordinating Council, the Advisory Board on Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation, and grant funding streams to state and local entities from both the Administration for Community Living and Department of Justice.

"I am proud to announce the formation of the Elder Justice Caucus," said Rep. King. "Approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older have experienced a form of elder abuse. That is why we formed this bipartisan caucus – to bring together members of Congress with a shared interest in protecting our nation's seniors from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation."

Excerpted from *King, Bonamici Announce Establishment of Bipartisan Elder Justice Caucus; Introduce Legislation to Reauthorize Elder Justice Act*. Media Center of Representative Suzanne Bonamici, May 25, 2017.



## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 15 June

June 15 is recognized around the globe as [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#), established by the United Nations in order to bring attention to the human rights violation of elder abuse. According to the UN:

"Elder abuse is a problem that exists in both developing and developed countries yet is typically underreported globally. Prevalence rates or estimates exist only in selected developed countries — ranging from 1% to 10%. Although the extent of elder mistreatment is unknown, its social and moral significance is obvious. As such, it demands a global multifaceted response, one which focuses on protecting the rights of older persons.

"Approaches to define, detect and address elder abuse need to be placed within a cultural context and considered along side culturally specific risk factors. For example, in some traditional societies, older widows are subjected to forced marriages while in others, isolated older women are accused of witchcraft. From a health and social perspective, unless both primary health care and social service sectors are well equipped to identify and deal with the problem, elder abuse will continue to be underdiagnosed and over-looked."

To read more about the UN's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day campaign, click [here](#).



PROTECT • DEFEND • EMPOWER

*Promoting policy and practice that improve the lives of vulnerable and abused adults in California.*

## PRINCIPLES OF ELDER JUSTICE

1. **The right to live free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation**, which requires heightened awareness, prevention, early detection, holding perpetrators accountable, and providing relief to victims.
2. **Access to the justice system** through affordable legal aid and advocacy, accessible courts, and legal remedies that reflect older victims' special needs and vulnerabilities.
3. **Equity in the allocation of resources for protective services and victims assistance** to reflect the needs of vulnerable people of all ages.
4. **Fair access to resources for all older adults**, which requires countering disparities resulting from bias, exclusion, discrimination, and disadvantage.
5. **Consumer protections and rights**, which requires aggressively pursuing predators who target older people and enforcing laws that protect consumers of long term services and supports, financial products, and housing.
6. **Ensuring the rights of people with cognitive impairments** through support in decision-making and options for surrogate decision-making that offer maximum autonomy, protection, and accountability.
7. **Services for people with disabilities** that promote independence and choice.
8. **Support for family caregivers and direct service workers** that acknowledges their needs and the true value of their contributions.

[www.elderjusticecal.org](http://www.elderjusticecal.org)

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***Elder Abuse Awareness Month event draws 200 to Sacramento Kick-off***

California advocates from throughout the state presented practical, workable solutions to address the issue of elder and dependent adult abuse at the June 1st Elder Abuse Awareness Month Kick-off Event. Sponsored by the California Department of Social Services and partners, the kick-off event featured innovative solutions for working with abuse victims and an overview of potential federal actions with elder justice implications.



Barry Brewer (above) presents an Elder Abuse Awareness Month resolution on behalf of Assembly Aging Committee Chair Ash Kalra as Carlos Morales of San Diego APS listens.



Bill Benson, Policy Director for NAPSA, brought news from Washington D.C. in his role as Keynote speaker for the Kick-off event.



Steve Cooney, former Chief Deputy Attorney General, accepts the **Excellence in Elder Justice Award** from Saralyn M. Ang-Olson, Senior Assistant Attorney General on behalf of former Attorney General Bill Lockyer.



State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Joe Rodriguez, CEJC Executive Director Lisa Nerenberg and Sarah Barnard of WISE & Healthy Aging helped plan and presented at the event.

**Upcoming Events**

August 8-9, 2017, Triple-A Council of California (TACC), Vagabond Inn, Sacramento. [Www.4TACC.org](http://Www.4TACC.org) for agenda and information.

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