

THE ELDER JUSTICE COALITION

A NATIONAL ADVOCACY VOICE FOR ELDER JUSTICE IN AMERICA
JOHN B. BREAU, HONORARY CHAIR ♦ ROBERT B. BLANCATO, NATIONAL COORDINATOR

September 19, 2009

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Senate Finance Committee
Kolan Davis-Minority Staff Director and Chief Counsel
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

The non-partisan, 573-member Elder Justice Coalition is writing to urge your support of the Lincoln-Hatch elder justice amendment (#37) to be offered next week to the Finance Committee health care reform bill.

The amendment is identical to legislation which was passed unanimously by the Finance Committee in the 110th Congress as S. 1070 and introduced as S. 795 in this Congress (Please see attached.) The amendment would represent the most significant federal commitment to date, to combat elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The amendment provides an unprecedented and dedicated funding stream for Adult Protective Services (APS), which operate in all states and are the front line workers helping the victims of elder abuse while concurrently emphasizing prevention.

Additionally, the amendment provides the authority to establish elder abuse forensic centers to aid in identification and reporting of abuse, provide grants to long-term care facilities to both recruit and retain qualified staff, improve the capacity of state long-term care ombudsmen to respond to and resolve abuse complaints, and provide important training grants to help those who are in regular contact with seniors to be able to detect and report elder abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Elder abuse is a national issue with local ties. Some recent cases in your state include:

"Grandparent Scam Resurfaces" --- The "Grandma I'm in jail and need your help" scam is alive and well in our area. NorthLand Agency on Aging has received two reports in the last two months ... --- Decorah Journal September 16, 2009 (IOWA) <http://is.gd/3lRj7>

"Official: Sex Caused No Harm to Nursing Home Resident" --- In Iowa, a professional caregiver who engages in sex with a nursing home resident can be criminally charged with dependent-adult abuse. --- DesMoinesRegister.com September 18, 2009 (IOWA) <http://is.gd/3pCeU>

"Nursing Home Board's Record Shows Delays, Inaction" --- The state board that disciplines Iowa's nursing home administrators hasn't issued any sanctions in two years and isn't reviewing the state's own care ... --- DesMoinesRegister.com September 13, 2009 (IOWA) <http://is.gd/3fCZy>

"Sexual Assault Victim Files Suit Against Nursing Home" --- The nursing home and its former employee Paul D. Hubbard are named as defendants. The suit stems from a Feb. 1 incident in which the woman was assaulted by ... --- Quad City Times September 14, 2009 (IOWA) <http://is.gd/3iAzN>

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The Senate Special Committee on Aging has estimated there may be as many as 5 million cases a year of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. A recent study by the MetLife Mature Market Institute and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse revealed that elder financial abuse costs its victims \$2.6 billion a year ([CLICK HERE](#) for the complete report.) Additionally, older women are impacted at twice the rate of older men ([CLICK HERE for the OWL Mother's Day 2009 report.](#)) Finally, videos capturing powerful stories of elder abuse featuring victims themselves, their families and advocates can be found at www.elderjusticenow.org.

One of the goals of health care reform is to improve quality of care. This goal should include being free from elder abuse, whether living at home or in a facility. Your support of the elder justice amendment will demonstrate your commitment to improved quality of care and security for older Americans. Congressional Budget office score on the amendment is pending, but funds for the EJA are discretionary, not mandatory. For more information, please contact Patricia DeLoatche in Senator Hatch's office.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Blancato
National Coordinator