

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 8, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 71

Introduced by Assembly Member Dodd

(~~Coauthor: Assembly Member Bloom~~)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bloom, Achadjian, Alejo, Atkins, Baker, Bigelow, Bonilla, Bonta, Brough, Brown, Burke, Calderon, Campos, Chang, Chau, Chávez, Chiu, Chu, Cooley, Cooper, Dababneh, Dahle, Daly, Eggman, Frazier, Beth Gaines, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gatto, Gipson, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gray, Grove, Hadley, Harper, Holden, Irwin, Jones, Jones-Sawyer, Kim, Lackey, Levine, Lopez, Low, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Melendez, Mullin, Nazarian, Obernolte, O'Donnell, Olsen, Patterson, Perea, Quirk, Rendon, Ridley-Thomas, Rodriguez, Salas, Santiago, Steinorth, Mark Stone, Thurmond, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wilk, Williams, and Wood)

May 14, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 71—Relative to Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 71, as amended, Dodd. Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim and acknowledge the month of June 2015 and every year thereafter as Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Elder and vulnerable adult abuse is a serious and
2 growing crisis in California; and

3 WHEREAS, Not a day goes by without reports of horrific cases
4 of abuse or exploitation of elder or vulnerable adults; and

5 WHEREAS, Throughout the United States, 10,000 people a day
6 are turning 65 years of age; and

7 WHEREAS, One in ten Americans 60 years of age and older
8 experience abuse each year; and

9 WHEREAS, One in every eight individuals over 65 years of
10 age is living with Alzheimer's disease and nearly one in two people
11 with dementia experiences some form of abuse by others; and

12 WHEREAS, Elder and vulnerable adults may be impacted by
13 any of a constellation of physical, mental, pharmaceutical, or
14 medical influences, any one of which could render them unable
15 to protect themselves or self-advocate, to report to authorities when
16 abuse occurs, or to testify against perpetrators; and

17 WHEREAS, A 2009 National Institute of Justice study found
18 that 11 percent of elders reported experiencing at least one form
19 of mistreatment, including emotional, physical, sexual, or neglect,
20 in the past year; and

21 WHEREAS, Elder and vulnerable adult abuse may be physical,
22 emotional, sexual, or fiduciary and consists of crimes that recognize
23 no boundaries of economic, educational, or social status, gender,
24 race, culture, religion, or geographic location; and

25 WHEREAS, Subtle indicators that abuse may be occurring
26 include bruises or pressure marks, unexplained withdrawal from
27 normal activities, a change in alertness, unusual depression, sudden
28 changes in financial situations, strained or tense relationships, or
29 frequent arguments; and

30 WHEREAS, Recognizing these signs is the first step toward the
31 prevention of elder and vulnerable adult abuse; and

32 WHEREAS, Elders who experience abuse or mistreatment face
33 a greater risk of impacting the health system or impacting the social
34 service system; and

35 WHEREAS, The growing rate of elder abuse and vulnerable
36 adult abuse exacts a heavy toll on public resources as elder financial
37 abuse victims often become nursing home residents that are
38 dependent upon Medi-Cal; and

1 WHEREAS, Elder and dependent adult victims have a mortality
2 rate three times that of the general public and are 300 percent more
3 likely to die a premature death; and

4 WHEREAS, The incidence of abuse and exploitation of the
5 developmentally disabled population is shocking. Over 80 percent
6 of women with developmental disabilities and over 30 percent of
7 men with developmental disabilities are sexually abused at least
8 once during their lifetime; and

9 WHEREAS, Given that one in every 110 babies born today has
10 a disorder on the autism spectrum, the rapid growth of special
11 populations in need of enhanced protection will further challenge
12 an overwhelmed patchwork of programs and services intended to
13 protect vulnerable adult populations; and

14 WHEREAS, Current estimates suggest that as few as one in 14
15 cases of elder and vulnerable adult abuse is reported, including
16 fewer than one in 25 incidents of financial abuse, because the
17 victims are ashamed, hopeless, intimidated, or afraid of the
18 perpetrator; and

19 WHEREAS, A comprehensive central data repository of all
20 child abuse investigations has been in existence since 1965, but
21 no similar repository exists for investigations of crimes against
22 vulnerable, elderly, and other dependent adults; and

23 WHEREAS, Even in 2015, with a rapidly expanding population
24 of elderly adults and other adults with disabilities that render them
25 vulnerable to predators, the State of California does not collect or
26 maintain comprehensive data on abuse cases, reports, or
27 investigations, thus inhibiting the government's capacity to be
28 informed about existing trends, and to make informed decisions
29 about the strategic use of existing resources, let alone improve the
30 existing reporting system, enhancing protections, or lending law
31 enforcement partners the tools necessary to secure justice; and

32 WHEREAS, The lack of statewide elder and vulnerable adult
33 abuse data prevents policymakers from measuring the extent of
34 these crimes and tragedies; and

35 WHEREAS, The lack of a statewide strategy that includes a
36 single point of contact to report an incident of abuse contributes
37 to the current state of underreporting, incomplete investigations,
38 lack of resources, ambiguous jurisdiction, and incomplete data;
39 and

1 WHEREAS, The California Commission on Aging and the
2 California Elder Justice Coalition convened an elder justice summit
3 in 2013 during which 140 experts and advocates identified
4 shortcomings in California’s response to elder abuse and proposed
5 promising solutions, including an Elder Justice Blue Ribbon Panel
6 to focus on the problem; and

7 WHEREAS, Elders and vulnerable adults have the right to live
8 safely in the least restrictive environment, whether in their homes
9 or health care facilities, and to enjoy an optimum quality of life
10 while being protected from all forms of injustice; and

11 WHEREAS, Private citizens and public agencies must work to
12 combat crime and violence against elders and vulnerable adults,
13 particularly in the face of continued funding reductions in vital
14 services; and

15 WHEREAS, Due to the ubiquitous nature of elder abuse, June
16 15 is recognized internationally as World Elder Abuse Awareness
17 Day, first established in 2006, to raise awareness of elder and
18 vulnerable adult abuse and to promote better understanding of the
19 cultural, social, economic and demographic issues behind the
20 growing incidence of elder and vulnerable adult abuse around the
21 globe; and

22 WHEREAS, All Californians are strongly encouraged to report
23 suspected abuse of an elder or vulnerable adult by calling their
24 local adult protective services agency, Long-Term Care
25 Ombudsman, law enforcement, or emergency services agencies;
26 now, therefore, be it

27 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
28 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature proclaims and
29 acknowledges the month of June 2015 and every year thereafter
30 as Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month; and be
31 it further

32 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
33 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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