

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG LAUDS PASSAGE OF ELDER PROTECTION ACT

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange applauded final legislative passage of the Protecting Alabama’s Elders Act. The bill extends and strengthens legal protections from financial exploitation and physical or emotional abuse for all people aged 60 and older.

“I am pleased that the Legislature has strengthened our state laws to provide special protections for all who are 60 years or older,” said Attorney General Strange. “Previously, such protection applied only if the victim was defined as physically or mentally impaired. Sadly, experience tells us that criminals repeatedly target older people as victims, and the law passed today is a strong weapon to combat this.”

The Attorney General’s Office was actively involved in leadership of the Interagency Council for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, which crafted the Protecting Alabama’s Elders Act. The Council was created by the Alabama Legislature to examine this problem and suggest solutions. Members include representatives of about 30 various law enforcement, judicial, legal, health and senior advocate agencies and other organizations.

Attorney General Strange commended the leadership of Senator Cam Ward and Representative Paul DeMarco, the sponsors who successfully moved the bill through the Legislature. He also thanked Commissioner Nancy Buckner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources and Commissioner Neal Morrison of the Alabama Department of Senior Services-- heads of the two agencies that, along with the Attorney General’s Office, are leading the Council in its efforts to protect and prevent elder abuse – for their dedication to the legislation.

The proposed legislation does not change the current penalties provided by the Adult Protective Services Act, which will still apply to victims categorized as protected persons. Rather, it adds new sections to Alabama’s criminal code, providing additional avenues for law enforcement and prosecutors to fight elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

Under this law, elder abuse and neglect can be prosecuted as first-degree, second-degree, or third-degree abuse or neglect, depending on the type and severity of harm to the victim. The penalties range from a class A misdemeanor for elder abuse and neglect in the third degree to a class A felony for intentional abuse or neglect which causes serious physical injury. The financial exploitation penalties range from a class A misdemeanor for exploitation of money or property totaling \$500 or less to a class B felony for exploitation of money or property exceeding \$2,500. A class A felony carries a sentence of 10 years to life; a class B felony, of two to 20 years; a class C felony, of one to 10 years; and a class A misdemeanor, of up to one year.

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