



To: Rep. John Barker, Chair, and Members,
House Judiciary Committee
From: Rachel Monger, Director of Government Affairs
Date: March 9, 2016

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 408

Thank you, Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee. I am Rachel Monger, Director of Government Affairs for LeadingAge Kansas. We have 160 members across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living and residential health care residences, homes plus, low income housing, home health agencies, home and community based service programs, PACE and Meals on Wheels. Our members serve more than 25,000 elders each day.

LeadingAge Kansas wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 408 and its expansion of the ability of the Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (ANE) Unit in the Attorney General's office to locate and prosecute cases of elder abuse and abuse of persons with disabilities. This committee has done excellent work on these issues, especially with the new law cracking down on power of attorney abuses. Now that we have the proper laws in place, the next step is to aid in the investigation and prosecution of vulnerable adult abuse. SB 408 will help achieve that goal.

Lagging decades behind child abuse and domestic violence, elder abuse is obtaining attention and recognition, but the process is slow. In the law enforcement area, elder abuse has traditionally been dismissed as too difficult to prosecute, or as an issue for the civil courts. We have seen those attitudes starting to disappear, but again, that process is slow. Allowing the ANE Unit to be able to view, follow up and investigate abuse reports will help tremendously in increasing awareness among law enforcement officers and encouraging more prosecutions. We also believe that the ANE Unit will be able to better support the investigation work of Adult Protective Services. We hope the committee will see SB 408 as an important next step in the fight against elder abuse.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share our thoughts. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.