

February 9, 2018

The Honorable Vicki Schmidt, Chair  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Reference: SB 311 – Mandatory Reporters of Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

Good morning Madam Chair and Committee Members. My name is Ernest Kutzley and I am the Advocacy Director for AARP Kansas. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a more than 315,000 members living in Kansas. AARP is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all as we age. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 311

Elder abuse, like many other forms of domestic abuse, is often a hidden phenomenon that affects at least hundreds of thousands of older Americans. Elder abuse can be physical, financial, or psychological. It may take place at home or an institutional setting.

Estimates of elder abuse vary greatly, and it is often underreported. A 2011 New York State study estimated that over the course of one year, 76 of every 1,000 people age 60 and older had been abused. The study's incidence rate was found to be almost 24 times greater than the number of cases reported to relevant authorities

AARP supports state efforts to establish a multidisciplinary approach to combatting abuse and exploitation. States and local area agencies should develop public awareness programs and home- and community-based services to help prevent, identify, and address cases of elder abuse and to instruct the public how and where to report elder abuse.

States should support the formation and ongoing operation of multidisciplinary teams to address elder abuse issues that cannot be effectively resolved by a single discipline.

This should include training of professionals from a variety of disciplines to improve detection, investigation, and enforcement regarding cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

AARP supports state efforts to establish a multidisciplinary approach to combatting abuse and exploitation. Every state or county should have a designated elder abuse prosecutor.

Therefore, AARP Kansas supports SB 311. We respectfully request the committee's support of this bill.

Thank you.