



STATE OF TENNESSEE
PROCLAMATION
BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, nationally and in Tennessee fraud and financial abuse are greatly underreported, and there is a great need to educate and raise awareness of this devastating crime; and

WHEREAS, fraud and identity theft are some of the most costly crimes Americans face. In 2016, according to data collected by the Federal Trade Commission, there were more than 3 million fraud, identity theft, and other consumer complaints representing more than \$744 million in reported losses from fraud. In Tennessee, approximately 56,754 of those complaints represented more than \$11 million in reported losses from fraud; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Consumer Affairs within the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance works tirelessly to educate consumers about fraud, identity theft and deceptive trade practices, to advocate for consumers through its mediation services, and to protect consumers by working with the Attorney General's Office and other local, state and federal agencies, to help in the prosecution of fraud; and

WHEREAS, in Tennessee, it is a crime for a caretaker to misuse government funds of an elderly or adults with a disability; and

WHEREAS, as gatekeepers for our communities, we all have a role in protecting seniors and adults with disabilities from fraud and financial exploitation, and the Tennessee Department of Human Services strives to raise awareness and educate people in the community about potential signs of abuse and exploitation and to take action to protect people who may be isolated or targeted from the risks of abuse including fraud and financial exploitation; and

WHEREAS, public awareness of this very costly problem is the key to preventing further exploitation/abuse and loss of money; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability and the Adult Protective Services Program within the Tennessee Department of Human Services are responsible for awareness, prevention, investigation, and reporting of fraud and financial abuse crimes against elderly and adults with a disability in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the statewide Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition, and the regional coalitions in South Central, East, Upper Cumberland, Middle, West and Northeast Tennessee are grassroots organizations working to eliminate the costly crimes of fraud and financial abuse, to educate vulnerable adults about prevention strategies, to identify suspicious activities, to raise awareness of the red flags of financial exploitation, to encourage reporting of such crimes as fraud and financial abuse, and ultimately to reduce the rates of fraud and financial abuse among vulnerable adults; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Departments of Human Services and Commerce and Insurance, along with the Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability declare fraud and financial abuse a state priority;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Haslam, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim the month of October, 2017 as

Fraud and Financial Exploitation Awareness Month

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this thirtieth day of October, 2017.

Handwritten signature of Bill Haslam in blue ink.

Governor

Handwritten signature of Joe Ragan in blue ink.

Secretary of State

