



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**PROCLAMATION**

BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, older Tennesseans are valued members of society, who deserve to live safely with dignity and as independently as possible with the supports they need; and

**WHEREAS**, elder abuse is a tragedy inflicted on vulnerable older Tennesseans and is an ever-increasing problem that crosses all socio-economic boundaries; and

**WHEREAS**, the Adult Protective Services (APS) Program of the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability (TCAD) are responsible for awareness, prevention, investigation, and reporting of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, and, do hereby declare prevention and deterrence of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation a priority in Tennessee; and

**WHEREAS**, the statewide Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition (TVAC) and the regional coalitions in Middle, South Central, East, Upper Cumberland, West and Northeast Tennessee are grassroots organizations working to educate older Tennesseans about prevention strategies; to identify suspicious activities; to raise awareness; and to encourage reporting of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Coordinated Community Response (CCR) team, comprised of approximately 20 state agencies and organizations, collaborates to improve the investigation, response and delivery of services to older and vulnerable adults through a focus on innovative and efficient intervention models to protect Tennesseans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance (IDCI) and its Insurance, Securities and Regulatory Boards divisions and the Tennessee Attorney General's Office Division of Consumer Affairs raise awareness about preventing financial scams, identity theft, and fraud across Tennessee by holding public outreach events and creating educational materials in order to assist the elderly and their caregivers; and

**WHEREAS**, Tennessee District Attorneys spearheaded the drafting, enactment, and implementation of a series of Public Acts to more clearly define and more effectively deter neglect, abuse, financial exploitation and harm to our elder population; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions (IDFI), Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP), Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference, and other state organizations and leaders work in support of efforts to prevent elder abuse for the well-being of older Tennesseans; and

**WHEREAS**, Disability Rights Tennessee (DRI) is the state's Protection & Advocacy (P&A) organization serving to protect the rights of Tennesseans with disabilities, including elders, through monitoring and investigating allegations of abuse and neglect where people live and/or receive services and working to resolve instances of abuse and neglect through legal advocacy interventions, including improved policies and practices; and

**WHEREAS**, nationally and in Tennessee elder abuse is greatly underreported and there is a significant need to increase education and awareness of this crime against our valued citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, all Tennesseans have a responsibility to serve as protectors of the older population, educating ourselves on how to empower and assist them, serve as a resource, and be attentive to supports and services; and

**WHEREAS**, Tennessee's older population shall be treated with respect and dignity to enable them to continue to serve as leaders, mentors, volunteers, and active members of this community; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim June 15, 2020 as

*Elder Abuse Awareness Day*

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 eighth day of June, 2020.

*Bill Lee*

Governor

*Lee Hargett*

Secretary of State