



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 any act that harms an older person or jeopardizes his or her health or welfare and 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 Program of the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability 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 Tennessee Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disability (TN4AD) and the statewide Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition 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; assist with the safety, healing and recovery from abuse; and

WHEREAS, the State Coordinated Community Response 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 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, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions, Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs), Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference, Tennessee Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts, and other state organizations and leaders work in support of efforts to prevent elder abuse for the well-being of older Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is the state's Protection & Advocacy organization serving to protect the rights of Tennesseans with disabilities, including elders, through monitoring of events, conflict resolution and investigating allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation where people live and/or receive services and working to resolve instances of abuse and neglect, through legal advocacy interventions, placement on the statewide abuse registry, systemic change by improving policies and practices; and

WHEREAS, Disability Rights Tennessee is the state's Protection & Advocacy 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;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim June 15, 2021 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 fourth day of June, 2021.

Bill Lee

Governor

Julie Margot

Secretary of State