



# Connecticut

Aging Committee

February 25, 2016

Testimony of AARP in Support of

Raised House Bill # 5289

An Act Concerning Protective Services for Vulnerable Persons

Submitted by:

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Distinguished Members of the Aging Committee,

AARP is pleased to provide comments in support of **Raised House Bill # 5289, AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS**, which would strengthen protections for vulnerable individuals and establish a framework to implement voluntary federal consensus guidelines for state adult protective services (APS).

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families.

Elder abuse, like many other forms of domestic abuse, is an often hidden phenomenon that affects hundreds of thousands of older Americans. AARP supports strong legal protections against elder abuse, and has been on the forefront of advocacy in support of federal and state laws and regulations that prevent, detect and address this fraudulent and illegal act.

The most prevalent form of elder abuse is financial exploitation, which can cause injuries far beyond the pocketbook. This abuse frequently affects seniors' physical and emotional health. The state in many instances finds itself trying to pick up the pieces. Yet, efforts to prevent this abuse through the passage of stricter laws is often cost neutral to the states. The enactment of stronger safeguards against the abuse of elders is a win, win, win situation for states, older adults and their families.

AARP promotes the use of multi-disciplinary approaches to address elder abuse issues that cannot be effectively resolved by a single discipline. We support efforts to provide

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

We are pleased that H.B. # 5289 would require the Department of Social Services to develop a strategic plan to incorporate Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State Adult Protective Services offered in Connecticut. AARP supports these federal APS guidelines, which address the need for consistent definitions and program standards. The federal Voluntary Consensus Guidelines would also take important steps to help improve on program administration, reporting, training, evaluation and program performance metrics.

H.B. # 5289 includes important steps to improve protective services and we look forward to working with the Committee, Adult Protective Services, and the broader stakeholder community to strengthen the state's response to elder abuse. Thank you.