



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton and President Young

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Recognizing June as Elder Abuse Awareness Month**

For the purpose of recognizing June as Elder Abuse Awareness Month, urging all Baltimoreans to learn the signs of elder abuse, and calling on the public to join with government at all levels to help eliminate the unconscionable mistreatment of elders in our communities.

Recitals

June is the month dedicated to raising awareness for abuse of the elderly. Elder Abuse Awareness Month is tackling a huge, important issue since many seniors are being abused. Sadly, elders too often suffer from many kinds of abuse - including physical, financial, and emotional abuse.

According to HelpGuide.org, over half a million reports of abuse of elderly Americans are made to authorities each year. It's believed that many more instances are never reported. Elder abuse can be hard to detect because it can take place behind closed doors in an older person's home, caretakers in an institution can be the perpetrators, or scam artists can get at them over the phone, via computer, or at their front door. Sadly, many cases of abuse are at the hands of family.

Abuse is not always actively done with force. It can also be neglect. The senior is not fed, not kept clean or warm, not kept safe, not given proper medical care.

Since elder abuse is often so hard to detect, it is important for everyone to be able to pick up on the clues when it may be going on around you. HelpGuide.org offers suggestions of possible indications that an elderly person is being or has been abused:

- Do you see changes in personality or behavior?
- Is there noticeable tension or friction between the older person and their caregiver?
- Has the older person lost weight? This can be a sign of malnutrition or dehydration because of not being fed properly.

- Are they dirty, or are their clothes dirty?
- Are glasses broken and over time not repaired and taken care of?
- Are they seen wandering around on their own when they shouldn't be?
- Do you see signs of possible restraint, like rope marks or bruising on wrists or other parts of the body? Do they have bedsores?

Not all people who abuse the elderly will seem like bad people. Often they are just people who can't handle the pressures and responsibilities of looking after someone who is frail and unable to take care of themselves. But this does not change the fact that our seniors must be protected from such treatment, no matter what the reasons for it. If it looks like abuse may be going on, it should be reported so that it can be stopped.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council recognizes June as Elder Abuse Awareness Month, urges all Baltimoreans to learn the signs of elder abuse, and calls on the public to join with government at all levels to help eliminate the unconscionable mistreatment of elders in our communities.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Health Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Housing Commissioner, the Director of Social Services, the Executive Director of the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.