



The Honorable Ted Deutch  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2447 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Guy Reschenthaler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
531 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2020

Dear Representatives Deutch and Reschenthaler:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, thank you for your leadership on the important COVID-19 issues facing our nation, including the urgent issue of elder abuse of people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia. In addition, thank you for working together in a bipartisan manner to introduce the **Promoting Alzheimer's Awareness to Prevent Elder Abuse Act (S. 3703/H.R. 6813)**. We are proud to support this important legislation which would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop training materials to assist professionals supporting victims of abuse living with Alzheimer's and other dementia.

The burden of Alzheimer's on individuals and families continues to grow. More Americans are living with the disease – there are more than 5 million seniors age 65 and older living with Alzheimer's in 2020. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to nearly 14 million. These individuals are at heightened risk for experiencing elder abuse. Elder abuse is the intentional or negligent act by any person that causes serious harm to an older adult. This harm may be physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and/or financial. As many as 62 percent of persons living with dementia experience psychological abuse and as many as one-fourth have been physically abused. Additionally, one study found that 60 percent of elderly victims of sexual abuse have cognitive impairment. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of adults with dementia have experienced more than one form of abuse.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic and given the growing population of persons with dementia, police, firefighters, emergency personnel, and social workers will increasingly encounter these vulnerable individuals, and working with them can be fundamentally different from working with other older victims of abuse or exploitation. For example, individuals living with dementia often have difficulty understanding or explaining situations. Common behaviors experienced by individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementias could be viewed as uncooperative, disruptive, or combative unless professionals have training on the unique needs of someone living with dementia. **The Promoting Alzheimer's Awareness to Prevent Elder Abuse Act** addresses this need and will improve interactions between justice personnel and our constituents. This bipartisan bill is consistent with the *National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease* and will help ensure greater success for DOJ's efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud targeting seniors.

We deeply appreciate your leadership on behalf of the aging community and all American's living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. We look forward to working with you to advance this important bipartisan bill.



Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association  
Alzheimer's Impact Movement  
Elder Justice Coalition  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Society on Aging  
B'nai B'rith International  
Gerontological Society of America  
International Association for Indigenous Aging  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Justice in Aging  
LEAD Coalition (Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease)  
National Adult Protective Services Association  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A)  
National Association of Elder Law Attorneys  
SAGE: Advocacy and Services for LGBT Elders