

The Elder Justice Coalition

A National Advocacy Voice for Elder Justice in America
John B. Breaux, Honorary Chair ♦ Robert B. Blancato, National Coordinator

June 15, 2010

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Stabenow:

The non-partisan, 650-member Elder Justice Coalition writes to express its support for the Senate version of H.Res.1342 known as the “Seniors’ Bill of Rights.” With this resolution, Congress and the nation will be voicing a commitment to upholding the dignity and independence of older Americans.

The Elder Justice Coalition works to promote elder justice and elder rights across the nation. The Senate Special Committee on Aging estimates that more than 5 million older adults face some form of abuse each year. In March 2010, Congress passed the Elder Justice Act, which if funded, makes it possible to conduct necessary research, provide training, respond to the needs of victims and hold offenders of elder abuse accountable. The Elder Justice Act, for the first time, will provide much needed support to state and local governments for adult protective services (APS) which are on the front lines in combating the growing problem of elder abuse-- physical, financial, or emotional; and the bill also provides much needed support for long term care ombudsmen at the state and local levels.

As the resolution references, increasingly older American are the victims of financial fraud and exploitation. A 2009 study by the MetLife Mature Market Institute and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse estimates that \$2.6 billion or more is lost annually to financial exploitation of the elderly. As the US population continues to age rapidly and will double by the time all of the baby boomers reach 65, the rights of older Americans are increasingly important.

The “Seniors’ Bill of Rights” promotes the safety and well-being of older adults and aims to have a positive outlook on how we view older adults and their families. Elder abuse threatens the dignity, financial security and health care of older Americans. Thank you for introducing this important and timely resolution.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Blancato
National Coordinator