

June 29, 2012

Senator Richard Blumenthal
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), thank you for introducing the Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (S. 2077), a bill that will strengthen federal guidance and resources for states to prevent and respond to cases of elder abuse.

As the largest association of professional social workers with the dual mission of advancing the profession of social work and promoting social justice, NASW advocates for the well-being of older adults. The Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act amends the existing structure of the Older Americans Act (OAA) to provide for better incorporation of elder justice activities into senior services and state planning.

Elder abuse is a serious health issue of great concern to social workers, who are uniquely trained to recognize and respond to elder abuse. According to research funded by the National Institute of Justice, almost 11 percent of people age 60 and older, or 5.7 million individuals, experienced some form of abuse in the past year. In addition, a 2009 national study of elder mistreatment found that every year, an estimated 14.1 percent of all non-institutionalized older adults have experiences of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation which will ensure that policies are in place to prevent abuse toward our seniors.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH
Executive Director