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SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY FINDS:

NO EQUAL JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF ELDER FINANCIAL ABUSE

Financial abuse can result in great harm to the well-being of victims over the age of 65. However, unlike other California counties, Sacramento County does not have a proactive approach to combating this serious, growing problem, according to a newly published Grand Jury report. The Grand Jury has determined that elder adults who are victims of abuse by family members, trusted advisors, tradespeople, or unrelated caregivers are being deprived of justice.

The Grand Jury's investigation found that from 2019 through 2024, Sacramento County Adult Protective Services confirmed nearly 4,000 cases of elder financial abuse, yet the law enforcement agencies within Sacramento County referred only 123 cases to the District Attorney's Office for potential prosecution, and the District Attorney's Office filed charges in only 99.

"Neither the District Attorney (DA) nor county law enforcement agencies have dedicated staff specifically trained to investigate and prosecute elder financial abuse," said Elizabeth TenPas, Grand Jury Foreperson for 2024-2025. In fact, the District Attorney's website explicitly states that such exploitation is only prosecuted on 'rare occasions' by the elder abuse unit. Many abusers avoid consequences because the District Attorney's

Office does not prosecute financial abuse cases that are not accompanied by physical abuse, or involve large dollar losses or multi-victim schemes.”

Additional findings focus on the need for:

- increased funding for creating elder financial abuse prosecutor, investigator, and victim advocate positions in the DA’s office;
- each law enforcement agency to have at least one detective with specialized training in the investigation of elder financial abuse, as well as training for uniformed officers on recognizing the signs of such abuse;
- reactivation of the Financial Abuse Specialist Team to facilitate collaboration between the DA, law enforcement, social service agencies, legal services organizations, victim advocacy organizations, and financial institutions to combat financial elder abuse;
- improved record-keeping and data collection practices by Adult Protective Services and law enforcement agencies to allow tracking of elder financial abuse cases; and
- greater community outreach on the part of Adult Protective Services, the DA, and law enforcement agencies.

The full investigation is available for public review on the Grand Jury website:

www.sacgrandjury.org.

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