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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

June 13, 2017

The Honorable Salud Carbajal
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Carbajal:

I have sent the enclosed letters on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara to the House Committees on Ways and Means, Judiciary, and Education and the Workforce, expressing support for reauthorization of the Elder Justice Act, including provisions to improve the capacity of local adult protective services programs to respond effectively to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults, and to expand resources to address senior abuse and neglect.

According to the most recent Census, there are over 57,000 adults age 65 or above living in Santa Barbara – 13% of the County's total population. With the increase in this population comes an increase in elder abuse related incidences. Last year, there were more than 1700 reported cases in Santa Barbara County, and this year is on pace to exceed that total.

Elders have special circumstances - such as dependency, functional disability, minority status, age, and poor social networks - that make them more vulnerable to violence. In Santa Barbara County, the District Attorney's Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse Unit coordinates with Adult Protective Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office and local law enforcement agencies and resources to help victims and families cope with the effects of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Congressman King has introduced H.R. 2639, the *Elder Justice Reauthorization Act*, which would provide a simple reauthorization of the Act through 2021. As they consider H.R. 2639 or similar legislation to address elder abuse, please urge your colleagues who serve on these committees of jurisdiction to include the provisions enumerated above to improve the effectiveness of the Act.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas P. Walters
Washington Representative

TPW:awg