

PROTECT MINNESOTA ELDERS

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Senior Advocates Call for Veto of Supplemental Budget

St Paul - The Elder Abuse Consumer Coalition today announced its strong opposition to the inadequate elder care provisions contained in Senate File 3656, the supplemental budget bill, and called on Governor Dayton to veto the legislation. After months of testimony and pleas from family members and advocates, key protections were left out of the final legislation.

"No one should be confused into thinking that the legislature fixed Minnesota's elder abuse epidemic. The bill fails to provide the necessary and critical protections to address the thousands of abuse and neglect complaints that are filed each and every year," said Will Phillips, State Director of AARP Minnesota.

"Given the abuse our members have suffered, they are very disappointed with this weak legislation," said Kris Sundberg, President of Elder Voice Family Advocates. "Minnesota is the only state that does not license assisted living facilities, yet this bill does not provide a clear path to licensure. Nor does it provide families with access to information needed to protect loved ones from abuse and neglect. This is unacceptable."

Instead of protecting seniors from abuse, the bill makes it harder for vulnerable adults to hold facilities accountable. By requiring guardians of vulnerable adults to obtain consent in the presence of a facility employee before placing a camera, the bill puts an intimidating barrier in front of the existing right of a vulnerable adult.

"Cameras are an important tool in documenting abuse," said Phillips. "This provision undermines the ability of vulnerable adults or their guardians to speak for themselves and to prevent or deter abuse."

The bill also lacks protections against arbitrary discharges in assisted living facilities and lacks any means for vulnerable adults to enforce their rights against retaliation. Today, vulnerable adults can be discharged to unstable housing or an unsafe location, without an appropriate discharge plan.

"The bill unfortunately did not adequately address our priorities to improve care and quality of life for vulnerable adults in long-term care facilities," said Sue Spalding, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association MN-ND Chapter.

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