

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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In Council Testimony, Attorney General Racine Advocates for Better Ways to Protect Seniors from Financial Exploitation

AG Supports Goals of New Legislation and Calls for Additional Tools to Guard Seniors' Assets

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine testified last week before the Council of the District of Columbia's Committee on the Judiciary in support of the purposes and objectives of legislation to protect seniors from financial exploitation. In addition, he proposed exploring further legislative tools that would enable District officials to intervene more quickly to protect seniors' assets in cases where others may be exploiting them for financial gain.

Bill 21-326, the "Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults Amendment Act of 2015," was introduced by At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds and would expand the District's laws protecting "vulnerable adults" to include seniors. It would also make financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult — including exploitation accomplished by deception, manipulation, or undue influence — a criminal offense. It also establishes criminal penalties for exploiting seniors.

"The exploitation of our residents, particularly our seniors, is a problem that I identified as one of my top priorities when I ran for this office," Attorney General Racine said. **"I am particularly concerned about potential consumer fraud activities that take advantage of seniors, and others, in our community."**

In his testimony, Attorney General Racine called for additional tools that would allow the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and other District government agencies charged with protecting vulnerable residents to intervene quickly in cases of potential exploitation to protect seniors' assets. Currently, OAG has authority to go to court to ask for injunctions to bring an immediate halt to financial exploitation of seniors — however, that authority can only be exercised after a court case has been filed.

"When it comes to abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, every second matters," Attorney General Racine said. **"While OAG is currently authorized to seek injunctive relief, it is only after cases are filed with the court. This is a process that often takes weeks. During that time, the exploitation continues, seniors are abused, and their finances are drained. What is needed are the tools to take action prior to filing a case in court."**

Attorney General Racine thanked the D.C. Commission on Aging and its Chair, Romaine Thomas, for their work to help protect seniors. **“The Commission on Aging is a group of leaders who should be commended for their extraordinary advocacy for seniors on a number of issues, including the issue of financial exploitation,”** he said. **“I am proud to work with these leaders as we improve and expand the District government’s efforts to ensure we keep our seniors safe and sound in all aspects of their lives.”**

A copy of the Attorney General’s testimony as submitted to the Judiciary Committee is attached.

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