

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHARLES E. GRASSLEY**  
**HEARING, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
**ON ELDER JUSTICE: PROTECTING SENIORS FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT**  
**June 18, 2002**

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK SENATOR BAUCUS FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING TODAY. I APPRECIATE ALSO ALL THE WORK THAT SENATOR BREAUX HAS DONE ON THIS ISSUE THROUGH HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING.

OVER THE YEARS, MANY CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS HAVE BEEN HELD ON ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AND ON CRIMES AND SCAMS WHICH TARGET THE ELDERLY.

I HAVE CHAIRED A NUMBER OF SUCH HEARINGS MYSELF, STARTING AS FAR BACK AS WHEN I WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING OF THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES FROM 1983 TO 1986. MORE RECENTLY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING, I HELD A NUMBER OF HEARINGS DEALING WITH DIFFERENT FORMS OF ELDER ABUSE.

AND I REMEMBER FROM MY DAYS AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING, BEFORE I CAME TO THE SENATE, HEARINGS ADDRESSING ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

FROM ALL OF THIS CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT OVER THE YEARS, IT DOES SEEM CLEAR THAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE OFTEN VICTIMS OF ABUSE OF DIFFERENT KINDS, PARTICULARLY AT OLDER AGE LEVELS WHEN RELIANCE AND DEPENDENCE ON OTHERS BECOMES MORE COMMON.

BUT IT ALSO SEEMS CLEAR THAT ALL OF THIS CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION HAS NOT REALLY CULMINATED IN A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT, OR ANY SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE TO IT AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.

THIS HEARING MUST BE ONE OF THE FIRST, IF NOT **THE** FIRST, TO REVIEW THE PROBLEM OF ELDER ABUSE AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S RESPONSE TO IT IN A SYSTEMATIC WAY.

I HOPE THAT WHEN WE FINISH THE HEARING TODAY, WE WILL KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT ELDER ABUSE IS, MORE ABOUT THE GAPS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM, AND WHAT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE IN THE WAY OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS ISSUE.