

Madam Chair Lyons,

The Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging respectfully requests reconsideration of the sixth amendment: In Sec. 1, 33 V.S.A. chapter 69, subchapter 1, in section 6902, in subdivision (34)(C)(ii), by inserting the phrase the specific report of before “abuse” (the “nexus” issue).

Requiring a link between the type of abuse and a person's disability unnecessarily narrows the range of victims entitled to the protection envisioned under the bill, which intended to *expand* victim protection. Someone physically vulnerable to abuse but cognitively sound is still at risk of financial exploitation due to the dependent nature of the relationship with a caregiver. The power imbalance present in caregiver relationships creates the vulnerability. Contrary to assertions, the statute's definition of a vulnerable adult is not broader than those of other states that do not also require a link between a person's disability and the type of abuse.

While the bill is supposed to be revenue neutral, this amendment would seem to create a greater strain on department resources by requiring investigations into whether there was a nexus with the type of abuse to determine whether to even investigate, something not required under the current statute.

We thank you for your willingness to reconsider the sixth amendment to H.171.

Mary H. Hayden
Executive Director, Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)