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Date: March 25, 2021

To: The Honorable Senator Kellie Warren, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Ernest Kutzley, AARP Kansas

RE: HB 2153 - Increasing the criminal penalty for mistreatment of a dependent adult or elder person when the victim is a resident of an adult care home.

Madam Chair and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to present our written testimony. My name is Ernest Kutzley and I am the advocacy director for AARP Kansas. On behalf of our more than 290,000 members in Kansas, we support HB 2153, which will increasing the criminal penalty for mistreatment of a dependent adult or older person when the victim is a resident of an adult care home.

AARP has a long history of fighting for protections against elder abuse and we continue to be on the forefront of advocacy and educational efforts to break down silos and strengthen laws against all forms of elder abuse.

Elder abuse is a complex issue. It can be physical, financial, or psychological. It may take place at home or in an institutional setting. The consequences of elder abuse can include physical injuries, emotional distress, and financial hardship. Victims can be at increased risk for new illnesses and existing health conditions can get worse.

Kansas should increase penalties when vulnerable individuals are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation or provide for their own health, safety, or welfare. This also serves as a deterrent to elder abuse, particularly when victims can recover attorneys' fees and treble damages. Enhancing legal protections against elder abuse could help prevent it.

We support the efforts in this bill to increase the criminal penalty for mistreatment of a dependent adult or elder person when the victim is a resident of an adult care. Everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect and be cared for with dignity and respect. Therefore, we support HB 2153 and respectfully request your support of this legislation.

Thank you,  
Ernest Kutzley

