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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ELDERLY.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that financial  
2 exploitation is a fast growing form of elder abuse. Financial  
3 exploitation occurs when a person misuses or takes the assets of  
4 an elderly victim for that person's own personal benefit. This  
5 frequently occurs without the explicit knowledge or consent of  
6 the elderly victim and deprives the elderly victim of vital  
7 financial resources. Assets are commonly taken via forms of  
8 deception, false pretenses, coercion, harassment, duress, and  
9 threats.

10           According to the National Adult Protective Services  
11 Association, recent research indicates that elder financial  
12 exploitation is widespread and sometimes even deadly. The rate  
13 of financial exploitation is high with one in twenty elderly  
14 persons indicating some form of perceived financial mistreatment  
15 occurring in the recent past. Elder abuse is vastly under-  
16 reported with only one in forty-four cases of financial abuse  
17 being reported.



1           Ninety per cent of abusers are family members or trusted  
2 individuals, such as caregivers, neighbors, friends and  
3 acquaintances, attorneys, bank employees, pastors, and doctors  
4 or nurses. Common ways that family members or trusted  
5 individuals exploit elderly victims to gain control over the  
6 elderly victim's assets include misusing a power of attorney,  
7 use of joint bank accounts in a manner not authorized by the  
8 elderly victim, misusing ATM cards or stealing checks to  
9 withdraw money, threatening to harm the elderly victim, refusing  
10 to obtain care and medical services needed by the elderly  
11 victim, and overcharging for in-home care provider services.

12           In Hawaii, state laws and various services protect  
13 vulnerable adults, including the elderly. First, the adult  
14 protective services program is a mandated service of the adult  
15 protective and community services branch of the department of  
16 human services, which provides crisis intervention, without  
17 regard to income, including investigation and emergency services  
18 for vulnerable adults who are reported to be abused, neglected,  
19 or financially exploited by others or seriously endangered due  
20 to self-neglect. Second, the attorney general is authorized by  
21 law to bring a civil action on behalf of the State against any



1 caregiver who commits abuse, including financial and economic  
 2 exploitation, of a dependent elder. Third, financial  
 3 institutions are required by law to report suspected financial  
 4 abuse that is directed toward, targeted at, or committed against  
 5 an elder to the department of human services and the appropriate  
 6 county police department if certain conditions exist. Lastly,  
 7 state law provides enhanced penalties for certain crimes that  
 8 are committed against an elderly person or the property of an  
 9 elderly person.

10 The purpose of this Act is to provide an additional  
 11 mechanism to protect the elderly against financial exploitation  
 12 by making the financial exploitation of an elder by a caregiver  
 13 a class A felony.

14 SECTION 2. Chapter 708, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
 15 amended by adding a new section to part IV to be appropriately  
 16 designated and to read as follows:

17 "§708- Financial exploitation of an elder; caregivers.

18 (1) A caregiver commits the offense of financial exploitation  
 19 of an elder if the caregiver intentionally or knowingly  
 20 financially exploits the elder; provided that the total value of  
 21 the money or property taken or used shall be more than \$50,000.



1       (2) Financial exploitation of an elder is a class A  
2 felony.

3       (3) For the purposes of this section:

4       "Caregiver" means any person who has undertaken the  
5 temporary or permanent care, custody, or physical control or  
6 supervision of, or who has a legal or contractual duty to care  
7 for the health, safety, and welfare of, an elder.

8       "Elder" means a person who is sixty years of age or older.

9       "Financial exploitation" means the unauthorized taking,  
10 withholding, misappropriation, or use of an elder's money, real  
11 property, or personal property. "Financial exploitation" may  
12 include but is not limited to:

13       (a) Breaches of fiduciary relationships, such as the  
14 misuse of a power of attorney or the abuse of  
15 guardianship privileges, resulting in the unauthorized  
16 appropriation, sale, or transfer of property;

17       (b) The unauthorized taking of personal assets; or

18       (c) The misappropriation, misuse, or unauthorized transfer  
19 of moneys belonging to the elder from a personal or  
20 joint account.



1 "Financial exploitation" may be committed by using coercion,  
2 manipulation, threats, intimidation, misrepresentation, or undue  
3 influence."

4 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that  
5 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were  
6 begun before its effective date.

7 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2075.

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**Report Title:**

Kupuna Caucus; Elderly; Caregivers; Financial Exploitation;  
Elder Abuse; Penal Code

**Description:**

Makes financial exploitation of an elder by a caregiver a class  
A felony. Defines "caregiver", "elder", and "financial  
exploitation". Effective 7/1/2075. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is  
not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

