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CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

The Honorable Bunmi Awoniyi
Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Grand Jury Report – No Equal Justice for Victims of Elder Financial Abuse**
Matter ID: 24-0781
Document No.: 1561163

Judge Awoniyi:

The City of Sacramento provides the following response to the Sacramento County Grand Jury, consistent with its obligations under California Penal Code section 933.05, to the Grand Jury report entitled "No Equal Justice for Victims of Elder Financial Abuse."

A. FINDINGS

F3. The Grand Jury finds some local law enforcement agencies do not consistently collect data to track elder financial abuse cases received from APS, making it impossible to determine if these cases are fully investigated or referred to the DA for prosecution. (R3)

The City of Sacramento disagrees partially with the finding.

The City agrees that the current computer records management systems are unable to capture, in aggregate, the number of referrals made from a variety of sources. In addition, individual cases are examined, evaluated, investigated, and referred to the District Attorney's office based on the unique and individual facts of each case making tracking difficult without better systems. However, each case record is maintained and can be reviewed in accordance with the law.

F6. The Grand Jury finds law enforcement agencies in Sacramento County are not placing as much priority on elder financial abuse as other types of elder abuse, allowing abusers to avoid consequences. (R6)

The city of Sacramento agrees with the finding.

Unfortunately, the declining staffing levels at both the Sacramento Police Department, and law enforcement agencies for major metropolitan police departments throughout the United States, have forced departments to triage and prioritize reported crimes. In the spectrum of providing for public safety, crimes of violence take precedence over financial crimes. Whether this results in financial abusers avoiding consequences is unknown.

F8. The Grand Jury Finds several of the law enforcement agencies in Sacramento County lack dedicated detectives with specialized training in the investigation of elder financial abuse and as a result many abusers are not being held accountable. (R8)

The City of Sacramento disagrees partially with the finding.

While it is correct that the Sacramento Police Department does not have a detective dedicated solely to elder financial abuse, all of the Sacramento Police Department Burglary Detectives have a variety of training, experience, and necessary skill sets to investigate fraud cases, whether or not they involve an elderly victim. One of our current detectives has a greater degree of expertise in financial crimes and is assigned the more complex fraud cases. When investigative criteria are met, regardless of the victim's age, that case is investigated and submitted to the District Attorney's office for consideration for filing in order to hold the suspect accountable.

F9. The Grand Jury finds local uniformed law enforcement officers do not receive continuing education and training in how to recognize the signs of elder financial abuse, thereby allowing abusers to continue their victimization without consequences. (R9)

The City of Sacramento disagrees partially with the finding.

Every sworn officer in the Sacramento Police Department has attended the 6 hours of California Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) training included in Learning Domain 7, Crimes Against Persons/Death Investigations. Furthermore, in its academy the Department provides nine additional hours of training, with a portion focusing on elder abuse incidents, including financial crime-related offenses. This is reinforced with practical experience during each new officer's Field Training period. Sacramento Police Officers are equipped and skilled to detect elder financial abuse in the field. POST specifically identifies and prescribes critical perishable skill training for peace officers that must be delivered during Continued Professional Training (CPT) annually to each officer in the department. Elder fraud abuse is not one of those areas identified by POST, nor do they have a curriculum on this narrow crime category available.

F 13. The Grand Jury finds that there is insufficient community outreach by agencies within Sacramento County to educate elder citizens and their families and caregivers about financial abuse, so the signs of abuse may not be recognized. (R13)

The City of Sacramento disagrees partially with the finding.

While more communication with the public from law enforcement agencies on public safety topics is seen by the Sacramento Police Department as a positive and useful step, it is impossible to determine

what metric for communication could be used to measure and determine what would be “sufficient” or “insufficient” in any crime category. The Sacramento Police Department has used traditional media, social media, and community meetings to consistently educate the public on current criminal tactics involving fraud and how to protect vulnerable populations including elderly citizens.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that all local law enforcement agencies maintain a record of elder financial abuse cases referred by APS, including whether the law enforcement agency conducted additional investigation and whether it sent the case to the DA for potential prosecution, to begin by December 31, 2025. (F3)

This recommendation requires further analysis. Individual cases are examined, evaluated, investigated, and referred to the District Attorney’s office based on the unique and individual facts of each case. Each case record is maintained and can be reviewed in accordance with the law. The ability to track the specific the crime codes associated with elder financial abuse, whether they originated with APS or from other common sources in aggregate does not currently exist, and would best be implemented by a regional authority, likely APS. The feasibility of resourcing, evaluating, and implementing a records management software solution would have to be explored in concert with other agencies. This analysis would include sourcing the data management systems available for this purpose, providing adequate space and addressing necessary confidentiality issues, as well as the cost associated with the purchase, training, placement and implementation of such a system. The City will communicate with other law enforcement agencies in the region to determine if such a program is feasible before December 31, 2025.

A single entity within the county charged with tracking aggregate data for these types of cases would be the most responsive, useful, and accurate. If APS was able to utilize a system similar to the Child Protection Services’ Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System, it would likely result in the desired data and metrics.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends that all law enforcement agencies in Sacramento County raise the priority of elder financial abuse investigations to that of physical abuse, to begin September 30, 2025. (F6)

This recommendation will not be implemented. The City recognizes the significant impact that elder financial abuse and other property crimes have on victims. However, in order to best serve public safety and properly prioritize the dedication of resources, the response to and investigation of violent crime must remain primary. As resources and investigative capacity grows, the department would have the ability to increase emphasis on property crimes, including elder financial abuse, but those resources are not currently available.

R9. The Grand Jury recommends that the uniformed officers of each local law enforcement agency receive regular ongoing education and training to recognize signs of elder financial abuse, to begin by December 31, 2025. (F9)

This recommendation requires further analysis. As mentioned previously, POST does not currently offer the training described in this recommendation or an approved curriculum for tenured officers beyond what they have already received in Learning Domain 7 during the basic police academy. In order to implement this type of ongoing training the SPD would have to dedicate resources to developing this unique and specific curriculum, and also determine its ability to deliver the training to its officers among the litany of training elements already required of its officers, including perishable

skills training, critical functions training, best practices training, and new equipment training. Before December 31, 2025, the City will determine if there are adequate resources to create and implement the training recommended here.

R13. The Grand Jury recommends that law enforcement agencies, APS, the DA's office, and the FAST team develop and implement a coordinated plan for more widespread community outreach by all parties, by December 31, 2025. (F13)

This recommendation requires further analysis. The police department is open to exploring potential participation in engaging the public with educational opportunities to recognize financial abuses. The Sacramento Police Department has used traditional media, social media, and community meetings to consistently educate the public on current criminal tactics involving fraud and how to protect vulnerable populations including elderly citizens and will continue to do so. A more coordinated plan would enhance those outreach efforts. Before December 31, 2025, the SPD will communicate with the District Attorney, APS, and the Sacramento County Sheriff to determine if this type of coordinated outreach is feasible and how the department might best contribute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin McCarty", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin McCarty, Mayor
City of Sacramento

CC: (Via e-mail only)

Erendira Tapia-Bouthillier, Grand Jury Coordinator (TapiaE@saccourt.ca.gov)

Beth TenPas, Grand Jury Foreperson (TenPasB@saccourt.ca.gov)