# State of New York

## Executive Chamber

# Proclamation

**Whereas,** the Empire State recognizes the importance of respecting the rights of older New Yorkers as well as ensuring their safety, with full support for preserving their dignity and independence; and

**Whereas,** 4.2 million New York State residents are over the age of 60, comprising 21 percent of the total statewide population of 19.7 million; every year, thousands of older New Yorkers suffer from neglect or are victims of physical, emotional, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and/or neglect – including self-neglect; according to studies, it is estimated that only one in 23 cases of elder abuse ever comes to the attention of authorities; and

**Whereas,** older adults who are socially isolated are at increased risk for elder abuse, and this risk factor has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health crisis; and

**Whereas,** elder abuse is a preventable social problem that is impacting many of New York State's most vulnerable individuals, and it is important that the public, as well as professionals, know the signs of abuse, which can include physical trauma, depression, anxiety, and isolation from family members, neighbors, and friends; and

**Whereas,** elder abuse is also a major public health problem, with survivors suffering higher levels of psychological distress, being twice as likely to be hospitalized, and facing a greater risk of dying sooner than other older adults; and

**Whereas,** it is our collective responsibility to build safer communities for older New Yorkers – a society that values them and demonstrates conscientiousness and sensitivity to their needs – and to encourage reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation to local Adult Protective Services and law enforcement for investigations and intervention; and

**Whereas,** New York State agencies, including the Office of Children and Family Services, the Office for the Aging, the Department of Financial Services, and the Office of Victim Services, among others, are working diligently with local partners to increase public and professional awareness and implement a variety of measures to prevent and intervene in cases of elder abuse; and

**Whereas,** World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations (UN); this observance provides an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic circumstances affecting elder abuse and neglect; and

**Whereas,** the theme of this year's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is "Lifting up Voices," providing a renewed call to action for individuals, organizations, and communities to raise awareness about abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older people, and to send a strong message that causing physical and emotional harm to an older person, taking financial advantage of an older individual, or jeopardizing the health or welfare of an older adult is inexcusable and unlawful; and

**Whereas,** all older New Yorkers deserve to lead happy, healthy lives with dignity and respect, and this observance provides a fitting reminder and opportunity to recommit ourselves to its important goals of providing our elders with supportive, attentive care, and ensuring they have ample resources and protections in all areas of need;

**Now, Therefore,** I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York do hereby proclaim June 15, 2020 as

## ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

in the Empire State.

**Given** under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this tenth day day of June in the year two thousand twenty.

Governor

*Secretary to the Governor*
*Melissa DeRosa*