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**Testimony on behalf of the
Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General
Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Aging and Older Adult Services Committee
David P. Shallcross
Senior Community Liaison, Elder Abuse Unit
December 9, 2013**

Good Morning Chairman Hennessey and Samuelson. On behalf of the Office of Attorney General and our Elder Abuse Unit (EAU), we would like to thank the Committee for taking the time to address the very important topic of elder abuse. Pennsylvania seniors are targeted for many forms of abuse, including physical, mental, emotional and, particularly, financial. We have both a duty and an obligation to protect them.

As you know, the Commonwealth has the third highest percentage of elderly residents in the United States with nearly 2 million residents over the age of 65.¹ By 2020, Pennsylvania's 60 and older population is expected to be 25% of its total population --- more than 3 million people. Additionally, the number of people age 85 or older is expected to grow to more than 360,000 residents.²

Statistically, Pennsylvania's senior citizens are the favored target for many kinds of consumer fraud including identity theft, and fraud related to charities, telemarketing and sweepstakes. Our senior population also falls prey to financial exploitation by professionals, associates and family members at an alarming rate.

In 2012, the Elder Abuse Unit received 2,179 contacts for assistance via telephone, email, US Mail and fax. The majority of these contacts were related to financial fraud and exploitation, followed by other forms of abuse and reports of neglect of care. To date, our 2013 numbers are on track to surpass last year's contacts and complaints. As our senior population continues to grow, the impact on government services and law enforcement. We must plan for the future.

¹ US Census 2010

² US Census 2010

Unit provides training to local law enforcement and participated as instructors to PCCD crime prevention officer's courses. We continue to build relationships with state and local elder abuse task forces, coalitions and TRIAD programs throughout Pennsylvania. It is a valuable investment of time and resources to operate closely with these organizations to meet and exchange concepts, ideas and most importantly, solutions to issues that impact the elderly of our communities.

It is essential that open communication between law enforcement, health care, government, senior advocates, senior service providers, the financial industry and the community at large. This, along with strong legislation, is our best tool to ensure the older population of Pennsylvania is protected.

We look forward to working with the Committee to advance our mutual objectives in the protection of the elderly and care-dependent adults within the Commonwealth.