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## AARP Virgin Islands Pushes for Stronger Legislative Protections for Seniors

**AARP USVI is pressing lawmakers to adopt tougher safeguards for seniors, calling for stricter financial oversight, passage of the Protection of Specified Adults Act, and expanded reporting rules to strengthen elder protections across the territory.**

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**AARP State Director for the Virgin Islands Troy De Chabert-Schuster By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.**

The Virgin Islands Chapter of AARP is urging lawmakers to take stronger action to protect the territory's seniors. Following two Elder Justice Summit meetings, the organization outlined three priority areas for reform aimed at strengthening safeguards for older residents.

In a press release, AARP State Director for the Virgin Islands Troy De Chabert-Schuster stressed the importance of addressing these issues. “We need to ensure that our aging population can live their remaining years safely and with dignity,” he said.

To advance its agenda, AARP has met with several senators of the 36th Legislature as well as the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. The group identified three legislative priorities.

The first focuses on ensuring that the Division of Banking, Insurance & Financial Regulations is meeting its oversight and regulatory responsibilities when it comes to senior protections. “AARP VI is urging the Division to adopt and enforce protocols modeled after the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Institutions in Puerto Rico, specifically Regulation 9368,” the release stated.

Regulation 9368 requires annual training for financial institution employees to help them prevent, detect, and respond to elder financial exploitation. It also mandates timely reporting of suspected abuse, provides civil immunity for those who report in good faith, and imposes fines of up to \$5,000 per violation for institutions that fail to comply.

Beyond enhanced regulatory oversight, AARP VI is also advocating for the enactment of the Protection of Specified Adults Act. This measure would “authorize financial institutions to delay transactions when exploitation is suspected.” Under the proposal, financial institutions would be required to notify a trusted contact within three business days of a suspicious transaction. The law would allow for an initial 15-day hold on the transaction, with the option to extend the hold up to 30 business days if warranted.

A third priority seeks to expand the list of mandated reporters of elder abuse and financial exploitation to include notaries public. “Notaries often witness or authenticate major financial and legal transactions, making them vital partners in detecting and reporting abuse,” the organization said.

AARP VI argues these changes are needed to help seniors in the territory build financial resilience and security. “Our elders are our living history. They deserve protection, not abandonment,” said Pamela Toussaint, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach.

The organization added that the third and final Elder Justice Summit session is scheduled for September 25 on both St. Croix and St. Thomas, with the agenda set to focus on the needs of caregivers.