

Publication

A glass half full: the dubious history of elder abuse policy

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This article highlights the brief 30-year history of major U.S. policies that address elder abuse. The history of elder abuse policy is checkered and incomplete, reflecting a lack of comprehensive federal legislation. We begin our review by discussing the scope of elder abuse policy and, in particular, the Social Security Block Grant, which has become the sole source of federal aid for Adult Protective Services programs. The other source of federal aid, typically for helping efforts by Area Agencies on Aging, is the Older Americans Act. We document the incremental but increasing attention paid to elder abuse by chronicling key initiatives, including early congressional reports and hearings; White House Conferences on Aging; and efforts by pioneers such as Mario Biaggi, Claude Pepper, John Breaux, and Orin Hatch-efforts that we believe have led to the various introductions of the Elder Justice Act.

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