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AG Derek Schmidt, Johnson and Sedgwick County DAs commend passage of bill to strengthen elder abuse laws

TOPEKA – (May 3, 2018) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, Johnson County District Attorney Stephen Howe and Sedgwick County District Attorney Marc Bennett today commended the Kansas Legislature for unanimously passing a bill that would strengthen the state’s laws against elder abuse.

The measure, House Bill 2458, would expand the definition of criminal mistreatment of an elder person to include infliction of physical injury, unreasonable confinement or unreasonable punishment. It would also include violations of the guardian or conservator laws. The current statute prohibits financial abuse but not physical abuse.

The bill was approved by the Senate 40-0 yesterday, and won final approval from the House 119-0 today. It will now be presented to Gov. Jeff Colyer for his consideration.

“This legislation will allow Kansas to more vigorously prosecute those who abuse Kansas seniors,” Schmidt said. “As Kansas’ population continues to age, it’s important that we have laws to sufficiently protect seniors from physical and financial abuse.”

The bill was proposed earlier this year by Schmidt, Howe and Bennett.

“This bill provides greater protections to some of the most vulnerable members of our community while strengthening our ability to hold abusers accountable,” Howe said.

“This bill is a positive step forward in the fight to protect Kansas seniors,” Bennett added.

Schmidt is currently serving as president of the National Association of Attorneys General. During his presidency, the organization is focusing on helping states gather expertise and build capacity to fight elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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