



**PRESS RELEASE**

October 3, 2018

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**New Mexico Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Releases [Report](#) on Elder Abuse in the State**

The New Mexico Advisory Committee to U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has issued a [report](#) documenting experiences and concerns of community stakeholders related to abusive treatment of elders, and the need for improvements in policy, services, infrastructure, and public awareness. While legislative efforts have provided enhanced protections for elders, the Committee concluded that significant gaps exist in those protections. To inform the report, the Committee held a public meeting in June 2016. Among the Committee's recommendations to improve protections for elders:

- State and federal agencies need to bolster requirements for reporting and surveillance of cases;
- Creation of opportunities for mediation where there is a concern about an elder's capacity to control finances;
- Increased transparency in process of determining the need for court-appointed individuals or agencies;
- Bolstering or enacting statutes that protect elders from financial exploitation;
- In cases of financial exploitation, presumption of undue influence should be established;
- Court costs, attorney's fees, and damages should be available in cases of willful coercion; and
- The maximum number of judgments related to elder financial abuse should be enforced and collected.

Committee Chair Sandra Rodriguez said, "The members of the New Mexico Advisory Committee worked diligently over the past four years to research possible civil rights infractions against the elderly in the state, issuing important findings and recommendations for corrective actions. As Chair, I acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of Committee members, community members who offered testimony, the office of Congresswomen Michelle Lujan-Grishman, and the staff from of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights."

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*The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7<sup>th</sup> decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For more information about the Commission and our Committees, please visit [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*