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**Elder Abuse Victims, Survivors and Advocates
Tell Their Stories in Campaign Documentary
*National Premier at Capitol Hill Briefing***

WASHINGTON – A video documentary on elder abuse featuring stories of victims and survivors from across the country premiered on Capitol Hill today as part of a briefing where expert speakers urged Congressional passage of the Elder Justice Act.

“An Age for Justice; Elder Abuse in America” was developed as part of Elder Justice Now, a campaign that uses the power of video and the Internet to put a human face on the problem and allow elders and others a way to advocate for Congressional action.

Produced by the National Council on Aging and WITNESS, an international human rights organization, the documentary will -- in combination with hundreds of individual video stories filmed by trained elder advocates -- shine the light on what one interviewee called a “dark mark on our humanity.”

“The voices and images of so many victims, adult protective services workers, law enforcement, family members and caregivers drive home the need for action,” James P. Firman, president and CEO of the National Council on Aging said at the briefing. “Our nation’s seniors, especially the vulnerable, the frail and the very old, need federal protection now.”

The documentary shows families and individuals whose lives have been turned upside down by elder abuse. Vicki Bastion, 92, installed a security gate inside her home to protect her and what valuables she had left from her grandson and his gang-related friends. Betty Beckle’s daughter beat her. Bob Lee’s father was victimized by a paid caregiver. Pat Wilson’s husband, who has Alzheimer’s, was victimized financially by a young woman in Las Vegas.

The Senate Finance Committee recently incorporated the Elder Justice Act into its health reform bill, but passage of the Act still remains a question.

“The Act has been under consideration by Congress for years,” said Bob Blancato, national coordinator of the 570-member Elder Justice Coalition. “The legislation would finally provide the increased federal resources and leadership to prevent, detect, report treat, understand, intervene in and, where appropriate, prosecute elder abuse.”

“Congress must act now. Financial abuse alone costs older American seniors \$2.6 billion annually,” said Jenefer Duane, founder and CEO of the San Francisco-based Elder Financial Protection Network. At the briefing, Duane presented a petition with over 2,000 signatures from throughout the nation calling on Congress to Pass the Act.

Bill Benson, on behalf of the National Adult Protective Services Association, shared the latest data on how many older Americans have been victims of elder abuse. According

to a 2009 study by the Department of Justice, one in nine or 11% of seniors over age 60 experienced at least one form of elder abuse.

According to WITNESS Program Coordinator Kelly Matheson, who also directed the video, this is the first use of video advocacy in the aging field. Since 1992, WITNESS has worked in over 70 countries and trained thousands of activists to use video in international human rights campaigns.

“Through these stories, we wish to sensitize members of Congress and the American public that the freedom from worry about elder abuse is a basic human right,” she said.

The documentary and the video stories can be found on the campaign Web site www.ElderJusticeNow.org.

The National Council on Aging is a non-profit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA serves as a national voice for older Americans - especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged - and the community organizations that serve them. For more information, visit www.ncoa.org. WITNESS, an international human rights organization, uses video and online technologies to open the eyes of the world to human rights violations. For more information, visit www.witness.org.