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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **If it's Not Your Money - It's a Crime!**

*Financial exploitation of vulnerable Texans falls for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year*

What could be worse than exploiting an elderly person by stealing or misusing their money or property?

The good news is that the number of confirmed cases of financial exploitation declined for the second year in a row. Adult Protective Services (APS), a program of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), validated 856 cases of exploitation in Texas fiscal year 2016<sup>1</sup> compared to 934 cases in 2015 and 1,108 cases in 2014. This follows two years in which confirmed cases rose.

"It's good to see financial exploitation of seniors and people with disabilities trending down," said Kez Wold, associate commissioner for Adult Protective Services. "I think communities and financial institutions are more aware of exploitation than ever before and are more protective, but we can't relax."

Financial exploitation is when a relative, caretaker (or anyone with an ongoing relationship) improperly or illegally uses the money or property of someone who is elderly or has a disability for personal benefit or profit.

APS is putting a spotlight on stopping financial exploitation and other important issues for the elderly at a number of events from now until the end of the month. Check out the [APS events](#) in your area on [EveryonesBusiness.org](#).

### ***Recognizing Financial Exploitation***

The warning signs of financial exploitation include:

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices.
- Unexplained or unexpected withdrawal of large sums of money.
- Adding names to someone's bank signature card.
- Unfamiliar people accompanying bank customers to withdraw large sums.
- Unauthorized withdrawal of funds using ATM cards or sudden transfers of assets.
- Sudden changes in financial documents.

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<sup>1</sup> FY 2016 is the latest full year of data available. The Texas fiscal year runs from Sept. 1 - August 31.

- Unpaid bills despite having enough money.
- Previously uninvolved relatives who suddenly claim rights to a person's affairs and possessions.
- Abuse of power of attorney.

If you see signs of financial exploitation, call the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400) or report online at [TxAbuseHotline.org](http://TxAbuseHotline.org).

Find out more about this issue at [EveryonesBusiness.org](http://EveryonesBusiness.org), including tips on how Texans can protect themselves from financial exploitation.

### ***APS Facts and Figures***

- APS is a division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Its mission is to protect people who are 65 or older or who have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by investigating, and providing or arranging for services to alleviate or prevent further maltreatment.
- Texas has more than five million residents who are 65 or older or who are younger adults (18-64) and have a disability.
- APS investigated 12,335 allegations and confirmed that 856 people (living at home) were victims of financial exploitation in Texas last fiscal year.

### ***More Information***

- APS data is available in the online [DFPS Data Book](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) on the DFPS website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)
- Learn how to recognize and report adult abuse, neglect and exploitation with this online training: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/APS\\_Reporting/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/APS_Reporting/default.asp)