I MINA' TRENTAI UNU NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2012 (SECOND) Regular Session

BILL NO. 5/1-3/ (Cor)

Introduced by:

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Aline A. Yamashita, PhD/My

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 2950, REPEAL AND REENACT SECTION 2951, AMEND SECTIONS 2952 THROUGH 2954, ADD A NEW SECTION 2954(A), AND AMEND SECTIONS 2955 THROUGH 2960 ALL OF CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE 10, TITLE 10 GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO UPDATING THE ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES' MANDATES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

- Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. I Liheslaturan Guahan finds 2
- 3 the law which protects our *man'amko* (elderly) and adults with disabilities
- enacted on 30 January 1989, and amended in 17 May 1991, requires 4
- amendments to reflect politically correct and updated definitions that address 5
- the social-economic changes which continue to evolve and impact the family 6
- structure and community of Guam. I Liheslatura further finds that the 7
- Bureau of Adult Protective Services needs adequate staff and support from 8
- 9 government of Guam agencies to effectively execute its duties and mandates
- 10 as well as to respond appropriately and adequately to the potential increases
- in the number and complexity of referrals. 11
- 12 I Liheslatura intends to amend Chapter 2, Article 10 relative to the Bureau

- of Adult Protective Services, Title 10 Guam Code Annotated, that represents
- 2 the practice perspective from professionals who work in social services,
- 3 legal and medical fields whose goal and duty is to safeguard and protect the
- 4 total well-being of vulnerable adults and to provide services in a dignified
- 5 and respectful manner.

Section 2. 10 GCA § 2950 is *amended* to read:

"§ 2950. Purpose. The purpose of this article is to recognize that abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly or disabled adults with a disability are problems that require attention and intervention as a matter of public policy. Elderly or disabled adults with a disability need require the same societal protection now being provided by law to abused and neglected children and spouses. The obligation of the government to extend protective care and services to the abused elderly or disabled adults with a disability should be carried out in a manner least restrictive of individual rights and in accordance with due process. The family's contribution to the care of its elderly or disabled adults with a disability is acknowledged and every effort should be made to assist, support and enhance its caretaking role."

Section 3. 10 GCA § 2951 is *repealed and re-enacted* to read:

"§ 2951. Definitions. Definitions as used in this Article:

- (a) *Abandonment* refers to the desertion of an elderly or adult with a disability by his or her caregiver under circumstances in which a reasonable person would continue to provide care or custody.
- (b) Adult with a Disability is any person 18 years or older who:
 - (1) Has a physical or mental impairment which

1	substantially limits one (1) or more major life activities;
2	or
3	(2) Has a history of, or has been classified as having an
4	impairment which substantially limits one or more major
5	life activities.
6	(c) Bodily Injury means physical pain, illness, unconsciousness
7	or any impairment of physical condition.
8	(d) Bureau of Adult Protective Services means the "Bureau"
9	established by § 2955 of this Article.
10	(e) Caregiver is any family member or any person, health
11	facility, community care facility, clinic, home health care
12	agency or legal guardian who has the care or custody of the
13	elderly or adult with disability.
14	(f) Department refers to the Department of Public Health and
15	Social Services.
16	(g) Desertion refers to the act by which a person abandons and
17	forsakes, without justification, a condition of public, social, or
18	family life, renouncing its responsibilities and evading its
19	duties.
20	(h) Elderly refers to a person age sixty (60) years or older.
21	(i) Elderly or Adult with a Disability Abuse means self-neglect
22	or any one (1) or more of the following acts inflicted on an
23	elderly or adult with a disability by other than accidental means
24	by another person: physical abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
25	(j) Emotional or Psychological Abuse means fear, agitation,
26	confusion, severe depression, or other forms of serious
27	emotional distress that is brought about by forms of

intimidating behavior, threats, harassment, or by deceptive acts 1 or false or misleading statements made with malicious intent to 2 agitate, confuse, frighten, or cause severe depression or serious 3 emotional distress of the elderly or adult with a disability. (k) Expunged means the sealing of records to all persons 5 outside of the Bureau of Adult Protective Services and law 6 enforcement agencies of Guam, and the federal agencies 7 entitled thereto, and a refusal by such agencies to admit the 8 9 existence of such records to persons not entitled to examine them. 10 (1) Financial or Property Exploitation means illegal or 11 improper use of an elderly or adult with a disability's money, 12 property or other resources for monetary or personal benefit, 13 profit or gain. This includes, but is not limited to, theft, 14 misappropriation, concealment, misuse or fraudulent 15 deprivation of money or property belonging to the elderly or 16 adult with a disability. 17 (m) *Investigation* means that activity undertaken to determine 18 19 the validity of a report of elderly or adult with a disability 20 abuse. 21 (n) Major Life Activities include, but are not limited to: caring 22 for oneself, performing manual tasks, standing, walking, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, 23 learning, reading, concentrating, thinking and working. 24 25 (o) Neglect means the failure of a caregiver to provide for the 26 physical, mental or emotional health and wellbeing of the elderly or adult with a disability and includes, but is not limited 27

1 to: (1) Failure to assist or provide personal hygiene for the 2 elderly or adult with a disability. 3 (2) Failure to provide adequate food, water, clothing or shelter. 5 (3) Failure to provide medical care for the physical and 6 mental health of the elderly or adult with a disability. No 7 person shall be deemed neglected or abused for the sole 8 reason that he or she voluntarily relies on treatment by 9 spiritual means through prayer alone in lieu of medical 10 treatment. 11 (4) Failure to protect an elderly or adult with a disability 12 from health, safety hazards, or physical harm. 13 (p) Physical Abuse means the willful infliction of injury that 14 results in physical harm. It includes, but is not limited to, cruel 15 punishment resulting in physical harm or pain or mental 16 anguish, such as direct beatings, slapping, kicking, biting, 17 choking, burning or unreasonable physical restraint or 18 19 confinement resulting in physical injury. (q) Physical Harm means bodily pain, injury, impairment or 20 21 disease. (r) Self-Neglect is characterized as the behavior of an elderly or 22 adult with a disability that threatens his/her own health or 23 safety. Self-neglect generally manifests itself in an older 24 person as a refusal to provide him/herself with adequate food, 25 clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medication (when 26 indicated), and safety precautions. The definition of self-27

neglect excludes a situation in which a mentally competent 1 older person or adult with a disability, who understands the 2 consequences of his/her decisions, makes a conscious and 3 voluntary decision to engage in acts that threaten his/her health or safety as a matter of personal choice. 5 (s) Serious Abuse means an act or omission resulting in serious 6 bodily injury that requires immediate medical attention, 7 permanent disfigurement, severe or intense physical pain. 8 protracted loss or permanent impairment of a bodily function, 9 organ or death; or sexual offenses pursuant to Chapter 25 of 10 Title 9, Guam Code Annotated. 11 (t) Sexual Abuse means any form of nonconsensual sexual 12 13 contact, including but not limited to unwanted or inappropriate sexual gratification, touching, rape, sodomy, sexual coercion, 14 sexually explicit photographing, sexual harassment, involuntary 15 exposure to sexually explicit material or language, and as 16 defined in the penal code of Guam. 17 (u) Substantiated Report means a report made pursuant to this 18 Chapter if an investigation by the Bureau of Adult Protective 19 Services, or its authorized agency, determines that there is 20 21 sufficient evidence to support the existence of the abuse or neglect. 22 (v) *Unsubstantiated Report* means a report made pursuant to 23 this Chapter if an investigation by the Bureau of Adult 24 Protective Services or its authorized agency determines that 25 there is insufficient or inconclusive evidence of abuse but 26

1	existence of the abuse cannot be disproved to the satisfaction of
2	the Bureau of Adult Protective Services."
3	Section 3. 10 GCA § 2952 through § 2954 are amended to read:
4	"§ 2952. Reporting of Elderly or Disabled Adult with a Disability
5	Abuse.
6	(a) Any person who, in the course of his or her employment,
7	occupation or professional practice comes into contact with elderly or
8	disabled adults with disabilities, has actual knowledge or reasonable
9	cause to believe that an elderly or disabled adult with a disability is
10	suffering from or has died as a result of abuse as defined in § 2951,
11	shall immediately make a verbal report of such information or cause a
12	report to be made to the Bureau of Adult Protective Services Unit and
13	shall, within forty-eight (48) hours, make a written report to the unit
14	bureau or its authorized agency. If a verbal report is made on a
15	Friday, a written report will be made by the next workday.
16	(b) Persons required to report abuse under subsection (A) (a) include
17	but are not limited to physicians, medical interns, medical examiners,
18	nurses, chiropractors, hospital personnel engaged in the admission,
19	examination, care or treatment of persons, social workers, employees
20	of nursing homes, and adult day care facilities, police officers,
21	probation officers and employees of homemaker service agencies,
22	emergency medical service (EMS) providers, non-emergency medical
23	transport providers, medical and allied health care providers, banking
24	or financial institution personnel, pension providers, and practicum
25	students in the field of health and human services.
26	(c) In addition to persons required to report under subsections (a) A

1	and (b) B, any other person may make such report to the Bureau of
2	Adult Protective Services Unit if any such person has a reasonable
3	cause to believe than that an elderly or disabled adult with a disability
4	is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse.
5	(d) Oral or written reports from persons required to report under
6	subsection (a) A and (b) B shall include the following information, if
7	available:
8	(1) The name of the person making the report and where he or
9	she can be reached. The identity of the person making the report
10	shall be confidential, but made available to an agency
11	contracted authorized by the Bureau of Adult Protective
12	Services to provide case investigation.
13	(2) The name, address and approximate age of the elderly or
14	disabled adult with a disability.
15	(3) Information regarding the nature and extent of the abuse, the
16	name of the person's caretaker, if known, and any medical
17	treatment being received or immediately required, if known.
18	(4) The name of the person or persons responsible for causing
19	the suspected abuse.
20	(5) The source of the report.
21	(6) Any other information which may assist in the investigation
22	of the suspected abuse. The identity of the person making the
23	report shall be confidential.
24	(7) The identity of the person making the report shall be
25	confidential.
26	(e) Reports of elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse may be
27	made anonymously under this Chapter.

§ 2953. Immunity from Liability.

- 2 (a) Any person who in good faith makes a report under this aArticle or
- 3 testifies in any administrative or judicial proceeding related to the
- 4 report is immune from civil or criminal liability for reporting or
- 5 testifying.

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- 6 (b) Any officer, agent or employee of the Bureau of Adult Protective
- 7 Services Unit-who performs his or her duties in good faith is not liable
- for civil or criminal damages as a result of acts or omissions in
- 9 rendering service or care to an elderly or <u>disabled</u> adult <u>with a</u>
- disability.
- (c) For the purpose of any proceeding, civil or criminal, the good faith
- referred to in subsections A-(a) and B-(b) shall be presumed.

§ 2954. Failure to Report.

- Any person required by subsection A-(a) and B-(b) of §2952 to report a
- case of suspected elderly or <u>disabled</u> adult <u>with a disability</u> abuse who fails
- to so report shall be liable for a fine of not more than Five Hundred Dollars
- 17 (\$500.00), except that for a second or subsequent offense, such person shall
- 18 be guilty of a misdemeanor. Funds shall be deposited in the manner
- 19 prescribed in § 2954(a), infra."
- 20 **Section 4.** A new 10 GCA, § 2954(a) is added to read.
- There is hereby created, separate and apart from other funds of the
- 22 government of Guam, a fund known as the Bureau of Adult Protective
- 23 Services Fund. The funds shall not be commingled with the General Fund,
- 24 is exempt from the Governor's transfer authority and shall be kept in a
- separate bank account. All funds collected shall be expended exclusively for
- purposes used to support the operations of the Bureau of Adult Protective

- 1 Services.
- 2 **Section 5.** 10 GCA § 2955 through § 2960 are amended to read:
- 3 "§ 2955. Bureau of Adult Protective Services Unit.
- The Division of Senior Citizens of the Department of Public Health and
- 5 Social Services, (the Department) shall establish a Bureau of Adult
- 6 Protective Services Unit which shall have sufficient staff to fulfill the
- 7 purposes of this Article and organized in such a way as to maximize the
- 8 continuity of responsibility, care and services of individual workers toward
- 9 individual adults and families. Therefore, at a minimum, the Bureau shall be
- 10 organized and staffed with:
- 11 (a.) One (1) Human Services Administrator to serve and lead the
- 12 Bureau.
- (b.) One (1) Social Services Supervisor I to provide support for the
- daily operations and supervision of the Bureau.
- 15 (c.) Three (3) Social Worker III to staff the Case Investigation Unit.
- 16 (d.) One (1) Social Worker III to staff the Intake and Aftercare Unit.
- (e.) One (1) Program Coordinator III to staff the Education and
- Outreach Unit to include the management of the Emergency
- 19 Receiving Home.
- The Unit Bureau shall be the sole unit bureau responsible for receiving
- 21 and investigating all reports of elderly or disabled adult with a disability
- 22 abuse made pursuant to this Article, specifically including but not limited to
- reports of abuse in facilities operated by the Department and other public or
- 24 private agencies and in private residences. The Unit-Bureau shall have
- 25 authority to delegate to other social service agencies the responsibility of
- 26 investigating reports of abuse, but shall monitor the investigations conducted

- 1 by such other authorized agencies.
- 2 The Office of the Attorney General will provide legal services to the
- 3 Bureau of Adult Protective Services at no cost to the Bureau.
- 4 § 2956. Duties of the Unit Bureau of Adult Protective Services.
- 5 The Unit Bureau shall:

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- (a) Receive on a twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) days a week basis
 all reports, both oral and written, of suspected elderly or disabled
 adult with a disability abuse in accordance with this aArticle and the
 regulations of the Department.
 - (b) Investigate and evaluate the information in the reports, either through its own investigators or through investigators of other authorized agencies. The investigation and evaluation shall be made within twenty-four (24) hours if the Unit-Bureau has reasonable cause to believe the adult's health or safety is in immediate-imminent danger from further abuse and within seven (7) days for all other such reports. The investigation shall include a visit to the facility or residence, an interview with the adult allegedly abused, a determination of the nature, extent and cause or causes of the abuse, the identity of the person or persons responsible for the abuse, and all other pertinent facts. The investigation shall be completed within thirty (30) days. If the investigating social worker of the Unit Bureau or other authorized investigating agency determines that it is appropriate, the social worker may request a law enforcement officer to accompany and assist the worker in the investigation. No social worker of the Unit Bureau or other authorized investigating agency shall enter the home of any individual pursuant to the provisions of

1	this aArticle without the consent of the individual, unless authorized
2	pursuant to subsection \in (c) of § 2957 of this <u>aA</u> rticle.
3	(c) Determine within sixty (60) days whether the report is
4	substantiated or unsubstantiated. If the assessment results in
5	determination that the elderly or disabled adult with a disability has
6	suffered serious abuse as defined in §2951, report such determination
7	to the Attorney General within forty-eight (48) hours. The Attorney
8	General may shall investigate and decide whether to initiate criminal
9	proceedings.
10	(d) Develop a coordinated system of protective services to prevent
11	further abuses to adults and to provide or arrange for and monitor the
12	provision of those services necessary to safeguard and ensure the
13	adult's well-being and development and preserve and stabilize family
14	life wherever appropriate.
15	(e) Make available, among its services for the prevention and
16	treatment of elderly and disabled adult with a disability abuse, through
17	authorized individuals and through inter-agency and intra-agency
18	assistance and cooperation, instruction in caring for elderly and
19	disabled adults with a disability, protective and preventive social
20	counseling care, and emergency shelter care.
21	(f) Appoint a mMulti-dDisciplinary tTeam (MDT) for the purpose of
22	providing case consultation, interagency treatment strategies and
23	collaborative planning to address complex cases and service gaps
24	involving an elderly or adult with a disability who is a victim of abuse
25	and/or neglect.
26	The MDT which may include, but is not limited to,

representatives from the Department of Mental Health and Substance 1 Abuse, the Guam Medical Society, Guam Legal Services Corporation, 2 Advocacy Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Guam, the Guam 3 Ministerial Association. Such members shall receive Forty-Five 4 5 Dollars (\$45) as compensation for attendance at any meetings of the team, but such compensation shall not apply to more than two (2) 6 meetings in any one (1) calendar month. No member shall receive any 7 other compensation, but shall be reimbursed for actual travel, 8 subsistence and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the discharge of 9 10 such member's responsibilities, including authorized attendance at meetings held away from Guam. a Bureau of Adult Protective 11 Services social worker, a representative of a law enforcement agency, 12 the medical profession, a mental health agency, the hospital, the 13 public guardian, a representative of any private or government social 14 service agency or advocacy office, Guam Legal Services Corporation, 15 and a representative of the Mayors' Council of Guam. The MDT shall 16 document all actions and efforts in addressing the needs of the client. 17 (g) Functions of the Bureau are subject to the appropriation of funding 18 and allocation of personnel sufficient to carryout the operations of the 19 20 Bureau.

§ 2957. Consent of Victim; Guardianship.

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(a) An elderly or disabled adult with a disability who is a victim or alleged victim of abuse may refuse to cooperate in the investigation, or withdraw consent at any time to the provision of protective services by the Unit Bureau or its authorized agency The investigating agency shall act only with the consent of the victim or alleged victim of

abuse. However, the Unit Bureau shall have the responsibility to complete the investigation is responsible to investigate all complaints of abuse against the elderly or adults with a disability and shall have the responsibility to complete and document the investigative investigation efforts, regardless of the lack of cooperation of the victim of abuse.

- (b) If the elderly or disabled adult with a disability victim or alleged victim of abuse is so incapacitated that he or she cannot legally give or deny consent to an investigation or protective services, the Unit Bureau may initiate a petition for guardianship in accordance with Chapter 38 of Title 15 Guam Code Annotated, or initiate a petition for civil commitment pursuant to law.
- (c) If a social worker of the Unit Bureau or other authorized agency who is investigating a report of abuse is denied access to the alleged victim by a caregiver or household member, such agency may petition the Superior Court for an order allowing the Unit Bureau or agency immediate access to the alleged victim. The court shall give notice to the caregiver or household member who is denying access at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing. The Court may dispense with notice upon finding that immediate and reasonably foreseeable harm to the alleged victim will result from the twenty-four (24) hour delay. If, after the hearing, the court determines, based upon clear and convincing evidence, that the caregiver or household member should be required to allow access, the Court shall so order. The order allowing access shall remain in effect for a period not to exceed seventy-two (72) hours and may be extended for an additional

seventy-two (72) hours if the court finds that the extension is 1 2 necessary for the Unit Bureau or its authorized agency to gain access to the alleged victim. 3 (d) No person shall interfere with the provision of protective services 4 to an elderly or disabled adult with a disability who requests or 5 consents to receive such services. In the event that interference occurs 6 7 on a continuing basis, the Unit-Bureau, its designated authorized protective services agency, or the public guardian may petition the 8 court to enjoin such interference. 9 § 2958. Central Registry. 10 (a) The Unit authorized shall maintain a Central Registry of reports of 11 elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse, which shall contain 12 and be limited to the following information: 13 (1) The name, address and birthdate of the elderly or disabled 14 15 adult with a disability. (2) The date or dates and the nature and extent of the suspected 16 abuse. 17 (3) The locality in which the suspected abuse occurred. 18 (4) The name of the person or persons suspected of causing the 19 20 abuse. 21 (5) The progress of any legal proceedings brought on the basis of suspected abuse. 22 (b) Both substantial substantiated and unsubstantiated reports of 23 elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse shall be placed and 24

maintained in the central registry. for a period of ten (10) years.

(c) If an An investigation of a report of suspected elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse, that does not determine within ninety (90) days of the date of the initial report that it is a substantiated or an unsubstantiated report, shall be classified as an inconclusive finding.

Therefore, all information identifying the named victim and perpetrator or perpetrators shall be expunged.

§ 2959. Confidentiality.

- (a) All records maintained by the Unit Bureau regarding reports of abuse, including but not limited to information contained in the central registry, shall be confidential and shall be released only with the consent of the elderly or disabled adult with a disability or, if the adult is not competent, only with the consent of the adult's guardian, and shall be released only to individuals designated in this § 2959.
- (b) Records may be released, only as necessary to serve and protect the adult, to the following:
 - (1) Any agency or individual, authorized, contracted or licensed through the Unit Bureau to care for, protect or provide services to an elderly or disabled adult with a disability who is a victim of abuse, which agency or individual shall share information related to the abuse with the Unit Bureau.
 - (2) Courts of competent jurisdiction, upon finding that access to the records may be necessary for determination of an issue before the court. Access shall be limited to inspection by the court only, unless the court determines that disclosure of the records to interested parties is necessary for resolution of an issue pending before it.

(3) Grand juries when connected with the prosecution of a case 1 of elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse. 2 (4) Properly constituted authorities or agencies, including 3 police departments, prosecutors and attorneys general 4 investigating a report of known or suspected elderly or disabled 5 adult with a disability abuse. 6 (5) A physician examining or treating an elderly or disabled 7 adult with a disability where the physician suspects the adult of 8 having been abused. 9 (6) The guardian or attorney of the elderly or disabled adult's 10 guardian or attorney with a disability. 11 (7) A duly authorized official of the Unit-Bureau. 12 (8) The victim or alleged victim of the abuse. 13 (9) After, and only after, a court proceeding has been initiated 14 15 regarding the abuse, the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of the abuse. 16 (c) Records may be released to sources other than those identified in 17 subsection B (b) only when a written authorization from the victim or 18 alleged victim, or his or her guardian specifically provides consent to 19 have the record released or reviewed. In the event the guardian is the 20 alleged perpetrator, this provision will not apply. 21 (d) Regardless of subsections A-(a), B-(b) and C-(c), identities of 22 persons reporting elderly or disabled adult with a disability abuse shall 23 24 remain anonymous and release of the identity of a person reporting such abuse, or information which would identify the reporter of abuse, 25

is strictly prohibited.

(e) Students authorized by the Director of the Department may be 2 permitted, under direct supervision, access to Bureau of Adult 3 Protective Service ('BAPS') files for the purpose of field practice, 4 research and to gather statistical information. Such authorized 5 students, under supervision, may be permitted to receive BAPS 6 referrals and participate in BAPS intake, interviews and case 7 management assignments. Such authorized students shall be 8 registered in a field placement, practicum internship, or block 9 placement with an accredited college or university. Such authorized 10 students will be under the direct supervision of a social services 11 supervisor and subject to all conditions of this Chapter and 12 government of Guam policies, procedures and guidelines. Such 13 authorized students shall not disseminate any information beyond the 14 scope of the program objectives. 15

(f) Any person who willfully releases or permits the release of any information or records is in violation of this Section and shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

§ 2960. Appropriation.

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(a) Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) are hereby Funds shall be appropriated from the General Fund to the Department for the implementation operations of the Unit Bureau to allow the Bureau to carry out its mandates. which The appropriation shall cover staffing requirements, vehicles, cellphones, APS database and registry, logistics, contracting of services, and emergency shelter for victims of elderly and disabled adult with a disability abuse.

1	(b) Within three (3) months following the end of each fiscal year, the
2	Unit Bureau shall submit a report to the Governor, the Superior Court,
3	the Legislature, and the public, which shall include:
4	(1) Description of the activities of the Unit Bureau and all
5	designated agencies during the preceding year.
6	(2) Statistical information about the number and types of
7	reports received during the preceding year.
8	(3) Results of the assessments and evaluations conducted and
9	the amount, type, and costs of services provided.
10	(4) Information on the quality of services provided and the
11	result of such services in terms of alleviating abuse.
12	(5) Identification of problems that may arise in the
13	implementation of this article.
14	(6) Recommendation for action on the part of the Legislature
15	whenever deemed vital for the protection of the elderly and
16	disabled adults with a disability.
17	(7) Amount collected and use of funds of the "Bureau of Adult
18	Protective Services Fund," in accordance with § 2954(a),
19	supra."
20	Section 6. Severability. If any provision of this Act or its application
21	to any person or circumstance is found to be invalid or contrary to law, such
22	invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Act which
23	can be given effect without the invalid provisions application, and to this end
24	the provisions of this Act are severable.