

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Proclamation

PROCLAIMING JUNE 2026 AS NATIONAL ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH
IN THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

WHEREAS, of Santa Cruz County's more than 268,000 residents, 24 percent of the current population—roughly 64,320 people—are age 60 years and older, representing every racial, ethnic, religious, gender, socio-economic and ability demographic in the county, and it is expected the number of residents over age 60 will climb to 30 percent by 2030; and

WHEREAS, older adults of all ages, abilities and backgrounds enrich and strengthen our community by serving as leaders, mentors, volunteers and vital members of our community, each of whom deserve to be treated with respect and dignity; and

WHEREAS, although over 3,000 reports of elder abuse or neglect are received each year by the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department's (HSD) Adult Protective Services (APS), elder abuse remains one of the most unrecognized and underreported issues affecting older adults, with recent studies estimating approximately 1 in 10 people in the United States age 60 and older have experienced some form of elder abuse, and where alarmingly, for every case reported to authorities, as many as 24 cases may go unreported, highlighting a significant gap in awareness and intervention; and

WHEREAS, as the lifespan of our aging population increases, the dedicated social workers and public health nurses of HSD's APS program collaborate with valued partners to plan for improved ways to best meet the collective needs of vulnerable seniors, and to further develop services for the best care and protection to those older adults vulnerable to elder abuse; and

WHEREAS, Santa Cruz County earned its AARP age-friendly community designation in 2022 through collaborations with local cities, law enforcement agencies, the District Attorney, the local Seniors Council (Area Agency on Aging), the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Office of the Public Guardian, and many community service partners to prevent abuse, protect victims, and prosecute offenders who abuse our elderly; and

WHEREAS, collaborative partnerships help ensure comprehensive social structures are developed so people may retain community and societal connection as they age, resulting in lower rates of abuse and increased social, cultural and political actions that build real and sustainable change where all older adults can live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Monica Martinez, Chair of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, hereby proclaim June 15, 2026, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and the month of June 2026 to be National Elder Abuse Awareness Month, and urge all Santa Cruz County residents to help prevent and report elder abuse, and to support the well-being of all older adults throughout Santa Cruz County and beyond.



Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

June 1, 2026

Date