



Pope Francis' message rails against elder abuse

[A White Paper by Americans Against Abusive Probate Guardianship](#)

In his remarks today to the Congress, Pope Francis made clear his concern for the vulnerable. His words resonated with those who have been abused and oppressed by the predatory guardianship system. In order to heed the words of the Pontiff, we must accept the responsibility and challenge to advance urgent reform.

Here, in italics, are the Holy Father's exact words seen through the lens of those oppressed by abusive Guardianship with commentary in green.

Pope Francis exhorted legislators to care for people.

*Legislative activity is always based on **care for the people**. To this you have been invited, called and convened by those who elected you.*

Legislative leaders must urgently reform the current system

Pope Francis noted the importance of organizations which offer assistance to those in need.

*I would like to take this opportunity to dialogue with the many thousands of men and women who strive each day to do an honest day's work, to bring home their daily bread, to save money and – one step at a time – to build a better life for their families. These are men and women who are not concerned simply with paying their taxes, but in their own quiet way sustain the life of society. They generate solidarity by their actions, and **they create organizations which offer a helping hand to those most in need.***

Like AAAPG.

Guardianship victims desperately want to honor and rescue these same people.

Pope Francis clearly stated his respect for seniors and their value to Society and the importance of their potential

I would also like to enter into dialogue with the many elderly persons who are a storehouse of wisdom forged by experience, and who seek in many ways, especially

through volunteer work, to share their stories and their insights. I know that many of them are retired, but still active; they keep working to build up this land.

Guardianship literally erases these very people—it must stop!

Pope Francis made clear the need compassion and fairness to defend life at all times.

Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us. The Golden Rule also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development.

Involuntary, unnecessary artificially created guardianship to profit predators is the antithesis of this call for compassion.

Pope Francis upheld the dignity of life

I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from

The guardianship industry destroys sacred human lives and reduces them to chattel

Pope Francis challenged legislators to actively defend the vulnerable.

A good political leader is one who, with the interests of all in mind, seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism. A good political leader always opts to initiate processes rather than possessing spaces.

Legislators cannot allow the abuses to continue. They must rise to the challenge meaningful reform now!

Pope Francis emphasized the critical importance of family

...It is my wish that throughout my visit the family should be a recurrent theme. How essential the family has been to the building of this country! And how worthy it remains of our support and encouragement! ...I can only reiterate the importance and, above all, the richness and the beauty of family life.

Involuntary guardianship sacrifices family on the altar of greed.

Pope Francis is deeply concerned about the vulnerable among us

In particular, I would like to call attention to those family members who are the most vulnerable.

The Pope is deeply concerned with sins and abuses against the vulnerable among us—while the guardianship industry (or racket) preys on them with impunity.

Pope Francis challenged us to be great.

A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to “dream” of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work, the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton

We must heed the words of Pope Francis.

To do so we must come together to rescue our most vulnerable citizens from current and future abuses, including financial abuses, by passing legislation which makes guardianship abuse and all other forms of **elder abuse criminal.**

- We must not rely on administrative sanctions to curb abuses—they are ineffectual and trivial compared to the lucre at stake
- We must revoke any existing Sherriff’s agreements that prevent local law enforcement from accepting public complaints of guardianship abuse.
- We must take every step needed to effect meaningful enforceable reform legislation
- We must demand that State’s Attorneys accept and prosecute criminal behavior by guardians and their lawyers
- And we must accomplish these goals in this session while there is momentum for reform.

AAAPG prays that the words of the Holy Father will not fall on deaf ears in the Legislature and Law Enforcement.

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