

CHAPTER 237

(House Bill 583)

AN ACT concerning

Crimes – Financial Exploitation of Elderly – Penalty

FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person from knowingly and willfully obtaining by deception, intimidation, or undue influence the property of an individual that the person knows or reasonably should know is of at least a certain age, with intent to deprive the individual of the individual's property; altering a certain definition of "undue influence" to include the exercise, under certain circumstances, of certain dominion and influence over an individual of at least a certain age; applying certain penalties; making conforming changes; and generally relating to the financial exploitation of the elderly.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Criminal Law

Section 8–801

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2002 Volume and 2008 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Criminal Law

8–801.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "Deception" has the meaning stated in § 7–101 of this article.

(3) "Deprive" has the meaning stated in § 7–101 of this article.

(4) "Obtain" has the meaning stated in § 7–101 of this article.

(5) "Property" has the meaning stated in § 7–101 of this article.

(6) "Value" has the meaning stated in § 7–103 of this article.

(7) (i) "Undue influence" means domination and influence amounting to force and coercion exercised by another person to such an extent that a

vulnerable adult **OR AN INDIVIDUAL AT LEAST 68 YEARS OLD** was prevented from exercising free judgment and choice.

(ii) “Undue influence” does not include the normal influence that one member of a family has over another member of the family.

(8) “Vulnerable adult” has the meaning stated in § 3–604 of this article.

(b) **(1)** A person may not knowingly and willfully obtain by deception, intimidation, or undue influence the property of an individual that the person knows or reasonably should know is a vulnerable adult with intent to deprive the vulnerable adult of the vulnerable adult’s property.

(2) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY AND WILLFULLY OBTAIN BY DECEPTION, INTIMIDATION, OR UNDUE INFLUENCE THE PROPERTY OF AN INDIVIDUAL THAT THE PERSON KNOWS OR REASONABLY SHOULD KNOW IS AT LEAST 68 YEARS OLD, WITH INTENT TO DEPRIVE THE INDIVIDUAL OF THE INDIVIDUAL’S PROPERTY.

(c) **(1)** A person convicted of a violation of this section when the value of the property is \$500 or more is guilty of a felony and:

(i) is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 15 years or a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both; and

(ii) shall restore the property taken or its value to the owner, or, if the owner is deceased, restore the property or its value to the owner’s estate.

(2) A person convicted of a violation of this section when the value of the property is less than \$500 is guilty of a misdemeanor and:

(i) is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 18 months or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both; and

(ii) shall restore the property taken or its value to the owner, or, if the owner is deceased, restore the property or its value to the owner’s estate.

(d) A sentence imposed under this section may be separate from and consecutive to or concurrent with a sentence for any crime based on the act or acts establishing the violation of this section.

(e) A conviction under this section shall disqualify the defendant from inheriting, taking, enjoying, receiving, or otherwise benefiting from the estate, insurance proceeds, or property of the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM OF THE OFFENSE,**

whether by operation of law or pursuant to a legal document executed or entered into by the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM** before the defendant shall have been convicted under this section and shall have made full restoration of the property taken or of its value to the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM**.

(f) This section may not be construed to impose criminal liability on a person who, at the request of the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM OF THE OFFENSE**, the [vulnerable adult's] **VICTIM'S** family, or the court appointed guardian of the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM**, has made a good faith effort to assist the [vulnerable adult] **VICTIM** in the management of or transfer of the [vulnerable adult's] **VICTIM'S** property.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2009.

Approved by the Governor, May 7, 2009.