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January 31, 2002

Honorable Chief Justice  
Ronald George  
and Association Justices  
Supreme Court of California  
300 South Spring St., Second Floor North  
Los Angeles CA 90013

Re: CONSERVATORSHIP OF LEVITT  
2<sup>ND</sup> CIVIL NOS. B140538, B142397  
SUPREME COURT NO. S 102 726

Your Honors:

I am writing to you as a private citizen about a serious matter before your court: the petition for certiorari to review the *Conservatorship of Levitt* decision. I believe this decision denies equal protection of the law to elders and dependent adults who are not wealthy.

I am just now retiring, but for the last eleven years I have run Los Angeles County's Adult Protective Services (APS) program. This is a state mandated program that responds to reports of neglected or abuse against elder and dependent adults

My social work staff regularly experienced the most profound frustration over the failure of public institution to adequately address the needs of impaired adults who were both of modest means and financially abused. It is amazing how many people take financial advantage of the frail, disabled, and cognitively impaired who have little money or property to begin with. Many of these people are in their 80's and 90's. You can hardly imagine the devastating affect of loosing even what little they have.

This problem can only grow as our institutions allow these financially exploited victims to become public charges. It would make more sense for our laws to simply say that our institutions will not serve this class since that is the final effect anyhow.

I urge you to review the *Levitt* decision, giving special attention to this very disenfranchised and growing group of vulnerable adults. I do hope you will find a way to provide full access of elder abuse victims to the judicial system, regardless of their assets.

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Please understand that this issue of access is far broader even than the one presented here. For example, a 90-year-old victim of physical abuse had to go into court to obtain a restraining order, but could not physically bear the long waits for their case to come up. In another example, a poor bedridden person could not transport himself and the courts provided neither ambulance nor in-home justice.

Again, I urge you to review this decision and protect this disadvantaged class.

Respectfully submitted,



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