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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY
& BIOBEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
JAMES E. SPAR, M.D.
PROFESSOR & DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY
760 WESTWOOD PLAZA
LOS ANGELES, CA 90024-1759

The Honorable Chief Justice Ronald George
And Associate Justices
Supreme Court of California
300 South Spring Street
Second Floor North
Los Angeles, California 90013

Re: Conservatorship of Levitt
Court of Appeal Case No. B 140538, B 142397

Dear Chief Justice George:

I am an academic geriatric psychiatrist who does a fair amount of expert consultation and testimony in the area of civil competency and susceptibility to undue influence. In the course of this work I evaluate elderly, intellectually impaired individuals who are at risk for, or are actually suffering fiduciary and sometimes physical abuse at the hands of caregivers, friends, and occasionally relatives. For many of these victims the services of a competent elder law attorney is all that stands between them and financial ruin or worse. In the 21 years that I have been working in this area I have been impressed by the idealism, commitment, and dedication demonstrated by the attorneys that I've consulted and testified for, and by the gratifying outcomes of their interventions. I fear that the unintended consequence of the Levitt decision will be to deprive many elderly victims of abuse of any hope of competent legal assistance, and I urge you to review this decision before avoidable but irreparable harm is done.

Sincerely,

J. Edward Spar, M.D.
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry
Director, Division of Geriatric Psychiatry
Director, Residency Education