



COMMITTEE ON *DEMOCRATS*
ENERGY & COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2015

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**Statement by Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade
Hearing on “Fighting Fraud Against the Elderly, An Update”**

Thank you Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member Schakowsky for holding today’s hearing on ways to protect our seniors from fraud.

As we’ve seen far too often each year, fraud affects consumers of all ages, and the perpetrators of scams remain highly adept at avoiding the consequences of their criminal acts. Seniors, however, are a fast-growing segment of our population, and the threats to their financial security could mean billions of dollars in stolen assets if we let them fall prey to scammers.

Today’s seniors are living longer, more active lives, and possess greater wealth than previous generations of seniors. These are obviously encouraging trends, but also represent opportunities for abuse to occur.

Seniors are inundated with advertisements that promote fraudulent work-from-home arrangements, computer repair, anti-aging products, and many others. They are also targeted disproportionately for certain scams, like those involving prize promotions, health-related products and services, and reverse mortgages. In addition, more active lives increasingly means active on the Internet, where a significant number of scams originate, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Moreover, certain types of harassment, such as being constantly bombarded with telemarketing scams and feeling the need to stop answering the phone, can lead to feelings of isolation for our seniors.

Most troubling, we also are seeing a rise in abuse, particularly financial in nature, committed by those closest to seniors including family, friends, caregivers, or other trusted advisors. Seniors who are victimized are often hesitant to report crimes to law enforcement, either out of embarrassment or fear of retribution from their abuser. Others may simply be unaware of a crime committed against them.

A number of federal agencies stand ready to assist state and local services in combating fraud against seniors. The FTC and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau both play a key role in collecting data, educating consumers, and taking enforcement actions against the

perpetrators of financial exploitation. And as often is the case, much of the day-to-day fighting against fraud is occurring at the state and local levels. I look forward to hearing from these witnesses today about what is working and where we can improve our response to fraud against seniors.

Our seniors, and the savings they have worked so hard to build over the course of their lives, are at stake. Some seniors have seen their nest eggs wiped away, never to return. We need to ensure that all levels of government are doing what they can and have the tools they need to prevent these devastating scenarios. We owe this commitment to our seniors.

Thank you and I yield back.

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