



August 10, 2020

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**Jeff Landry**  
*Louisiana Attorney General*

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**Chris Toth**

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
2469 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Nadler  
Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
2132 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
House Judiciary Committee  
2056 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the Edith Shorougian Senior Victims of Fraud Compensation Act (S. 3487/H.R. 7620)

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, Chair Graham, Chair Nadler, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Ranking Member Jordan,

As our jurisdictions' chief legal officers, we are writing to request the inclusion of the Edith Shorougian Senior Victims of Fraud Compensation Act (S. 3487/H.R. 7620) in COVID-19 relief legislation. This bipartisan legislation, also known as "Edith's Bill," would amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) to include victims of senior fraud as eligible for reimbursement by the Crime Victims Fund for states that provide compensation to victims. This bill will also amend VOCA so that penalties and fines from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements, which can include white collar criminal conduct against seniors, are deposited into the Crime Victims Fund. We support inclusion of the full bill in COVID-19 relief legislation.

Scam artists know that seniors are especially at risk from COVID-19 and are exploiting the anxiety around this pandemic. They are targeting seniors who

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are isolating at home and are separated from their families and support networks.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General has warned that fraudsters “are offering COVID-19 tests to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal details, including Medicare information.”<sup>1</sup> This is unfortunately just one of many COVID-19 scams targeting seniors.

Senior fraud scams can be devastating on a personal and financial level. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimated in 2019 that elder financial exploitation cases resulted in an average loss of over \$40,000 and 7% of cases resulted in a senior losing over \$100,000.<sup>2</sup> Many seniors live on fixed incomes and savings earned over a lifetime of hard work. Older adults have contributed so much to our nation, and it is simply wrong that many are losing life savings to criminals. Tragically, it is rare for seniors to receive compensation even after fraudsters are caught and convicted. Edith’s Bill would take an important step in providing compensation to defrauded seniors, and it would do so without using taxpayer funds.

Throughout the country, attorneys general are fighting senior fraud and abuse. In 2019, several state attorneys general partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice and other federal partners to conduct the largest-ever nationwide elder fraud sweep against perpetrators who had repeatedly targeted seniors, resulting in losses of over \$750 million.<sup>3</sup> Though this initiative was a tremendous success, the total annual financial loss by elder abuse victims is estimated to be well over \$2.6 billion.<sup>4</sup>

Further, with 1 in 5 Americans expected to be over the age of 65 by 2030,<sup>5</sup> an increase in scams and frauds targeting seniors is widely expected. In Wisconsin alone, the number of reported elder abuse cases has already more than tripled since 2001.<sup>6</sup> Edith Shorougian was one of those Wisconsin victims. Edith was scammed out of more than \$80,000 by her longtime financial adviser. By using this legislation to add senior fraud as an eligible reimbursement expense under VOCA, states will be able to help victims like Edith receive the financial relief they deserve. States would be incentivized but not mandated by this legislation to provide compensation to victims of senior fraud.

We join the AARP, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), National Network to End Domestic Violence, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), National Children’s Alliance, National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), Alzheimer’s Association, Alzheimer’s Impact Movement, Elder Justice Coalition, Justice in Aging, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), Public Investors Advocate Bar Association (PIABA), Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS), North American Securities

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<sup>1</sup> <https://oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus/fraud-alert-covid19.asp>

<sup>2</sup> [https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\\_suspicious-activity-reports-elder-financial-exploitation\\_report.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_suspicious-activity-reports-elder-financial-exploitation_report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-coordinates-largest-ever-nationwide-elder-fraud-sweep-0>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.giaging.org/documents/mmi-study-broken-trust-elders-family-finances.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p00124a.pdf>

Administrators Association (NASAA), and Public Citizen in supporting this important legislation. We look forward to your continued partnership in protecting our nation's seniors.

Sincerely,



Jeff Landry  
Louisiana Attorney General



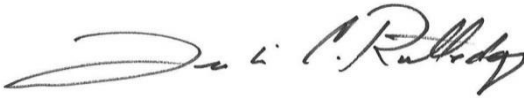
Joshua L. Kaul  
Wisconsin Attorney General



Steve Marshall  
Alabama Attorney General



Kevin G. Clarkson  
Alaska Attorney General



Leslie Rutledge  
Arkansas Attorney General



Phil Weiser  
Colorado Attorney General



Kathleen Jennings  
Delaware Attorney General



Karl A. Racine  
District of Columbia Attorney General



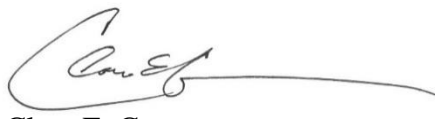
Ashley Moody  
Florida Attorney General



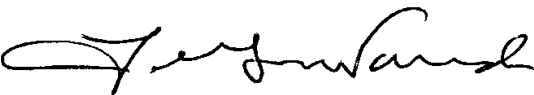
Christopher M. Carr  
Georgia Attorney General



Leevin Taitano Camacho  
Guam Attorney General



Clare E. Connors  
Hawaii Attorney General



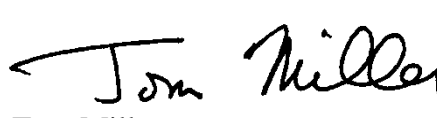
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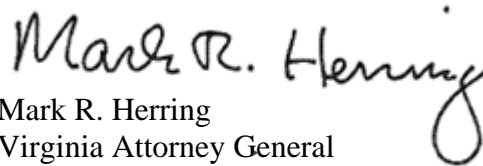
Alan Wilson  
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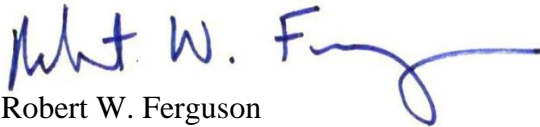
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Cc: Senate Special Committee on Aging Members  
Senate Judiciary Committee Members  
House Judiciary Committee Members  
House Elder Justice Caucus Members