

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 424

Designating October 2004 as “Protecting Older Americans From Fraud Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

Mr. CRAIG submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating October 2004 as “Protecting Older Americans From Fraud Month.”

Whereas perpetrators of financial crimes frequently target their fraud schemes at older Americans because older Americans possess a large percentage of the individual household wealth in the United States;

Whereas many older Americans have been divested of their hard-earned life savings by fraud and frequently pay a high emotional cost, losing not only their money, but also their self-respect and dignity;

Whereas perpetrators of fraud schemes against older Americans reach their victims through the telephone, the mail, or the Internet;

Whereas the United States Postal Inspection Service responded to nearly 80,000 fraud complaints, arrested 1,453 fraud offenders, secured nearly 1,387 fraud convictions, and initiated 102 civil or administrative actions involving fraud in fiscal year 2003;

Whereas fraud investigations by the United States Postal Inspection Service in fiscal year 2003 resulted in nearly \$1,500,000,000 in court-ordered and voluntary restitution payments;

Whereas older Americans are often the disproportionate targets of cross-border fraud, including prize promotions, sweepstakes scams, foreign money offers, advance-fee loans, and foreign lotteries, and file 20 percent of all cross-border fraud complaints;

Whereas there was an 80 percent increase in 2003 of reports of Internet fraud targeting older Americans, and the amount of money lost by older Americans to Internet fraud increased from \$2,690,618 in 2002 to \$12,818,313 in 2003, a 375 percent increase in money lost;

Whereas the Federal Trade Commission reports that 27,300,000 people in the United States have been victims of identity theft in the last 5 years, including 9,900,000 people in the last year alone, and that identity theft has cost businesses and financial institutions nearly \$48,000,000,000, in addition to the reported \$5,000,000,000 in out-of-pocket expenses incurred by consumer fraud victims;

Whereas there was a 200 percent increase in 2002 of identity theft targeting older Americans, and credit card fraud is perpetrated against older Americans at a higher rate than the general population of the United States;

Whereas the Federal Trade Commission continues to successfully implement its do-not-call registry, with 60 percent of consumers surveyed stating that they registered and 80 percent of the registered consumers surveyed reporting fewer calls, but more older Americans need to be aware that the do-not-call registry is available;

Whereas fraud schemes targeting older Americans have caused losses estimated at millions of dollars a year, and have cost some older Americans their homes;

Whereas consumer awareness is the best protection from telemarketing, mail, Internet, and identity fraud schemes, and the Federal Trade Commission and the United States Postal Inspection Service have resources available to educate and assist the public; and

Whereas it is vital to increase public awareness of the enormous impact that fraud has on older Americans and to educate the public, older Americans, their families, and their caregivers about a wide array of fraud schemes, such as telemarketing, mail, Internet, and identity fraud, and how to report suspected fraud to the appropriate authorities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates October 2004 as “Protecting
3 Older Americans From Fraud Month”; and

4 (2) requests that the President issue a procla-
5 mation calling on the people of the United States to
6 observe the month with appropriate activities and
7 programs that—

1 (A) prevent the purveyors of telemarketing,
2 mail, Internet, and identity fraud from victim-
3 izing the people of the United States; and

4 (B) educate and inform the public, older
5 Americans, their families, and their caregivers
6 about a number of financial crimes, such as
7 telemarketing, mail, Internet, and identity
8 fraud.

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