

AG Kaul: Leads bipartisan group of 44 AGs in urging Congress to pass legislation to protect senior victims of fraud

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is leading a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general in urging the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to include Edith’s Bill in COVID-19 relief legislation. This bipartisan legislation 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. Scam artists know that seniors are especially at risk from COVID-19 and they are targeting seniors who are isolated at home, separated from families and support networks.

“Edith’s Bill would support seniors who are victims of scams by helping states provide compensation to those victims of senior fraud. As this letter shows, a strong bipartisan coalition of attorneys general supports passing Edith’s Bill into law,” said Attorney General Kaul.

Edith’s Bill, or the Edith Shorougian Senior Victims of Fraud Compensation Act (S. 3487/H.R. 7620) 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. The bill is being led by Sen. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana in the Senate and Rep. Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon and Rep. Pete King of New York in the House, who both co-chair the Elder Justice Caucus.

Across all states, there has been a surge in COVID-19 scams targeting vulnerable

seniors. 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.”^[1] This is unfortunately just one of many COVID-19 scams targeting seniors.

Even after the pandemic, it is widely expected that seniors will continue to be targeted by fraudsters. By using this legislation to add senior fraud as an eligible reimbursement expense under VOCA, states will be able to help victims receive the financial relief they deserve. States would be incentivized but not mandated by this legislation to provide compensation to victims of senior fraud.

Joining Attorney General Kaul in the letter are the attorneys general of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

[A copy of the letter can be found here.](#)

The Wisconsin Elder Abuse website (www.ReportElderAbuseWI.org) and hotline (1-833-586-0107) is available for community members and victims for assistance in obtaining needed resources and making referrals to local authorities.

Press release: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/ag--kaul-leads-bipartisan-group-44-ags-urging-congress-pass-legislation-protect-senior>