



Attorney General Doug Peterson

News Release

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Bipartisan Group of 44 Attorneys General Urge Congress to Pass Legislation to Protect Senior Victims of Fraud

Lincoln--Attorney General Doug Peterson joined with a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general, led by Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry and Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul, 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.

“Now, more than ever, it is important to provide additional protection for our elderly family members and neighbors, to not only warn seniors about engaging with unknown solicitors but to take a step in providing compensation to defrauded seniors,” stated Attorney General Doug Peterson.

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. Baldwin of Wisconsin and Sen. Cassidy of Louisiana in the Senate and Rep. Bonamici of Oregon and Rep. 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.

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

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.

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

[A Copy of the bill can be found here.](#)

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