



May 16, 2013

The Honorable Lee Terry

Chairman

Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade

Energy and Commerce Committee

United States House of Representatives

2125 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Terry:

The National Consumers League (NCL), which is celebrating our 114th year of consumer and worker advocacy, applauds the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce for holding this hearing to discuss the growing threat of fraud targeting seniors. NCL is the only consumer group that has a National Fraud Center. We operate the center largely through our Fraud.org anti-fraud campaign. NCL has long worked to educate consumers -- particularly seniors -- about the dangers of fraud, particularly online and telemarketing scams.

By 2030, it is estimated that more than 72 million Americans will be above the age of 65. The percentage of Americans over the age of 65 will increase from 12.9% to 19% of the population.¹ NCL believes that this demographic change sadly presents a golden opportunity for scam artists and a serious threat to consumers. While fraud

¹ U.S. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Service. "Aging Statistics," Online: http://www.aoa.gov/Aging_Statistics/

can and does affect consumers of all ages and from all walks of life, seniors are especially tempting targets for certain types of fraud.

On a daily basis, NCL's Fraud.org staff members hear heartbreaking stories of seniors being scammed out of their retirement nest eggs. While we are able to help some spot and avoid being defrauded, far too many come to us after they've already lost a great deal of money, sometimes their life savings. All too often, we must give fraud victims the bad news that their savings are gone and are unlikely to ever be recovered.

As the threat of fraud against the nation's seniors grows, so too must the resources that federal agencies spend on fighting fraud. As the Subcommittee has noted, fraud against seniors results in billions of dollars in financial losses and incalculable emotional damage. Unfortunately, the budgets of agencies charged with protecting Americans from fraud have been stretched as never before. At a time when the perpetrators of fraud have a growing target market in America's aging seniors, we should not ask our anti-fraud agencies to operate with one hand tied behind their backs.

We therefore welcome today's hearing, examining the role of the federal government in addressing the growing threat of fraud against seniors. We welcome any opportunities to work in partnership with Congress and federal agencies to keep seniors informed and help protect them from scams and fraud. We look forward to a robust dialogue about this issue and a renewed focus on protecting America's aging Baby Boomers from fraud in all its forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sally Greenberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Sally Greenberg

Executive Director

National Consumers League

cc: The Honorable Leonard Lance, Vice Chairman
The Honorable Jan Schakowsky, Ranking Member