

**Opening Statement of Congressman Richard Hudson
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce Hearing on
“Consumers Beware: Increased Risks During the COVID-19 Pandemic”
July 9, 2020**

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Carter and thank you Madame Chair. Before I begin, let me first extend a special welcome to one of our witnesses, Kevin Anderson of the North Carolina Department of Justice. In North Carolina, we have seen pervasive attempts to defraud consumers especially among elderly populations. Last month over \$310,000 was lost to COVID related scams in our state. Additionally, NCDOJ has received 4,908 reports of illegal robocalls since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is just a small slice of what’s happening across the country but illustrates the importance of addressing this issue. We appreciate you joining us today and look forward to your testimony.

For the past several months, the United States along with the rest of the world has grappled with COVID-19 and its impact on our health, safety, and way of life. Not only has COVID-19 proven to be a deadly disease, but it has also created an environment where nefarious actors seek to take advantage of people’s fears and the unknown for their own personal profit.

To date we have seen a variety of fraudulent activity ranging from identity theft and financial scams to false claims about small business loans and medical treatments.

During our hearing on misinformation in the digital age, I discussed efforts I have taken to prevent the online sale and abuse of opioids. I believe we must take a similar approach to prevent the sale of deliberately misleading medications as it relates to COVID-19.

Thankfully, there have also been significant efforts to address these issues ranging from FTC enforcement to businesses taking actions to find and eliminate deceptive behavior before they negatively impact consumers. Together they have shown the

need for both the public and private sectors to work together on these important issues.

I am proud to have joined Mr. Carter as an original cosponsor of the Combating Pandemic Scams Act and am pleased to see how the use of emerging technology has not only allowed individuals to stay connected during this historic pandemic but also enabled us to leverage new resources to combat scams and fraudulent activity.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stay ahead of the changing nature of these scams and yield back the remainder of my time.