

LET'S PROTECT OUR SENIORS

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We in Texas are proud of our senior citizens' population and the great contributions and sacrifices they have made for our freedom and security.

Many states are working together to protect our seniors from fraud. It should be an honor getting older and becoming senior citizens. Our seniors shouldn't have to worry everyday about being ripped off by so many people.

Yet, senior citizens are increasingly under assault by the many con artists targeting them in scams that often devastate them and their families. These con artists appear in many disguises: illegitimate and unscrupulous businesses, caregivers, family members, sweepstakes and prize promoters, contractors, telemarketers, fraudulent insurance and investment advisors, and others. In the end, the senior citizen victims are left with a loss of security, dignity, and hope with little chances of ever recovering their losses.

In Texas, the current senior population (60 years and over) is over 400,000. The senior population will exceed 800,000 in 10 years and reach almost 1.5 million in 15 to 20 years. As the senior population continues to grow, we must increase our

efforts to educate and work with law enforcement agencies to bring awareness to them.

No one wants to hear this part of my message, but it's so true! The con artists are not the only ones who are out to target the seniors. Sometimes friends and family members will target them. Fraud is fraud no matter who targets them and if you're caught the law enforcement agencies will handle you. Some family members have control over seniors unable to think for themselves. It's very easy for the family to spend any amount when not having guidelines. The best thing to do is to contact an attorney and have the person write up a power of attorney. This will create a guideline for the family member in charge of the money.

We can help our senior citizens by getting involved and reporting fraud when suspecting it. Civic centers and Community programs can also assist by educating the senior citizens and the community. Please don't forget about contacting your local newspaper companies. They really help spread the message. We must do whatever it takes to protect our senior citizens. Just think, where would we be without them?