

Good morning, Senators.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Americans felt comfortable answering the phone and talking to strangers. We weren't suspicious of every number we didn't already know or look at every email and text with skepticism that it may be an elaborate scheme to steal from us.

Fraud has become ubiquitous in our country. For hundreds of thousands of older Americans every year, it has had a life altering effect, causing them to lose their life savings, damage their mental and physical health, to withdraw from society, and even to commit suicide.

According to the FTC, older Americans lose over \$61B a year to fraud. Where does it go? It goes to Transnational Organized Crime groups overseas, including to some in countries who are our nation's adversaries. This is a national security threat that we, as a country, are not effectively mitigating. This is most clearly manifest in the annual statistics from the FBI and FTC that show increases of up to 30% in fraud losses year after year, most significantly from our elders. I am unaware of any other crime which victimizes a particular demographic of Americans at these levels. It's time to admit what we are not doing enough to stop or even slow down the growth of this crime, and that it is time to make dramatic changes. I would like to make some recommendations on things our government can do to address this enormous problem.

Fortunately, many of America's companies already have mature and capable anti-fraud / vulnerable persons programs. These companies are highly capable of using the data they have to uncover fraud and those programs hold small pieces of the overall elder fraud puzzle. Unfortunately, they're generally working independently, and these pieces are not being put together with those of other companies. The same is true with law enforcement. Different agencies, or even different parts of the same agency, are not coordinating intelligence related to fraud to build the most impactful investigations on a regular basis.

As a nation, we have created task forces to combat internet crimes against children, terrorists, drug trafficking organizations and gangs, but not to counter those criminal organizations victimizing our parents and grandparents at an epidemic level. The power to change this dynamic is within our grasp by creating these task forces and teaming them up with the private sector.

Historically, state and local law enforcement have taken little or no role in investigating and prosecuting elder fraud cases. However, the investigative resources of state and local law enforcement are crucial in the solution to the problem, as there are not enough federal agents to adequately counter the threat. Combining resources will allow for more mutually supporting investigations across the country as well as the prosecution of co-conspirators committing state crimes. Deputizing, training, and funding state and local law enforcement to staff Elder Justice Task Forces (EJTFs) will create the capacity to better handle the enormous volume of complaints

related to these crimes. Linking the work of these EJTFs with national oversight will make their work more effective and efficient.

Each of these EJTFs will need the support of a law enforcement coordination center for that region, aggregating and analyzing the elder fraud leads collected by the various law enforcement agencies in that area and combining them with complaints from Adult Protective Services (APS), IC3 and the FTC. These leads can be analyzed, prioritized and used to initiate substantial investigations. The proof of this concept lies within the San Diego Elder Fraud Coordination Center, a joint effort among the 12 law enforcement agencies in San Diego County to understand the true scope of the elder fraud threat in San Diego and to make informed decisions on how to best use the limited resources of the San Diego EJTF.

Once created, these EJTFs will have the support and resources of the National Elder Fraud Coordination Center (NEFCC), a clearinghouse designed to aggregate, analyze and elevate the efforts of the private sector. Coupling the EJTFs with NEFCC will give America's companies the ability to contribute at scale to the elder fraud fight and allow law enforcement to develop bigger, more impactful investigations faster.

Building this network will be a massive step in bending the curve of elder fraud in America, keeping billions in the accounts of older Americans and in the U.S. economy.