

Maryland Officials and Non-Profits Unite to Combat Elder Financial Abuse

PROTECT Week is a statewide awareness and education campaign targeting abuse and financial exploitation of older adults.

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [AARP Maryland](#),

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*Hank Greenberg, AARP
Maryland State President*

the Maryland Attorney General, Comptroller of Maryland, Maryland Department of Aging, Maryland Department of Human Services, Office of Financial Regulation in the Maryland Department of Labor, and the U.S. Attorney's Office — along with a coalition of federal, local government, business and consumer groups — are kicking off PROTECT Week, a statewide awareness and education campaign targeting abuse and financial exploitation of older adults.

PROTECT Week is an annual initiative anchored around World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, June 15. During the week, partners will host free webinars, on-site workshops

and shred events to raise awareness about how to spot and combat elder financial abuse (For a complete schedule of virtual and in-person events, including free document shreds, visit www.aarp.org/md).

“Many of us living with the aftermath of a scam, experience the trauma of it repeatedly for years to come. Our family, friends, and some of the agencies that we are told to report to, often treat us like the perpetrator of our losses,” said Judith Boivin of Montgomery County, who was targeted by a government imposter scam and lost much of her life savings. “Were it not for the support and awareness that AARP has provided, through their well organized and managed Fraud Watch Network and initiatives like PROTECT Week, I would not be standing here today to share my story.”

“Financial abuse and exploitation are serious problems in our state, we must do everything we can to prevent them,” said AARP Maryland State Director Hank Greenberg. “PROTECT Week is a great opportunity for Marylanders to learn more about these issues and what they can do to help keep themselves and their loved ones safe.”

"The Office of the Comptroller is proud to join with our partners in this annual education campaign to make older Marylanders aware of scam attempts to target them and their personal finances," Comptroller Brooke Lierman said. "Thousands of older residents fall victim to deceptive phone calls and emails every year. PROTECT Week is a way to educate them on evolving scams and equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to protect themselves. My hope is that more Marylanders will be on guard against fraud and fewer people will lose their hard-earned savings."

"Financial abuse not only robs older Marylanders of their financial security but also threatens their dignity and independence," said Attorney General Anthony Brown. "By raising awareness, we can help safeguard our older adults from scams and fraud perpetrated by both strangers as well as familiar faces."

"Our team is committed to promoting the safety, stability and independence of seniors in our communities," said Maryland Department of Human Services Secretary Rafael López. "We need your help. Each financial exploitation case we open starts with a report from someone who is concerned. We do not know there's a problem unless you say something. So, if you suspect someone is being abused, neglected or exploited in any way, take action. Please call 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383)."

"Losing money to scams, fraud, and exploitation is difficult for anyone and can be devastating for older adults who are less likely to be able to earn back what they've lost," said Maryland Department of Aging Secretary Carmel Roques. "As Marylanders live longer, we must ensure the growing population of older adults can afford to live their later years financially secure, an epic goal of Longevity Ready Maryland, our multisector plan for aging. During Protect Week, the Department of Aging continues to educate and empower Marylanders and financial institutions to recognize, prevent, and report scams and fraud, protecting our citizens and their financial wellbeing."

"Financial fraud is on the rise, and it presents a particularly sinister threat to the well-being of Maryland's seniors and vulnerable individuals. Elder financial exploitation can take many forms, and as technology has changed and financial products have evolved, the crimes have become more sophisticated," said Commissioner of Financial Regulation Tony Salazar.

"People do not 'lose' money to scammers," reminded AARP Executive Council Member Karen Morgan. "Their money is stolen, by criminals who use emotional manipulation as a weapon."

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