

September 7, 2016

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Leahy:

Consumers Union writes in support of the bill S. 3270, the Elder Abuse Protection and Prosecution Act. This legislation takes important concrete steps to address a significant problem in our society, the vulnerability of elderly Americans to abuse and neglect.

As a consumer organization, we are particularly concerned about the growing incidence of fraud and abuse committed against the elderly in the marketplace, through telemarketing and Internet schemes. As the article in the November 2015 *Consumer Reports* article “Lies, Secrets, and Scams: How to Prevent Elder Abuse”¹ underscored, elderly Americans are prime targets for an increasing variety of malicious scams and swindles, limited only by the creativity of the malefactors.

We have laws to protect the elderly against such abuse, but those laws can be strengthened, and our law enforcement resources can be better focused on ensuring that those laws are effectively enforced. S. 3270 makes important contributions in both respects.

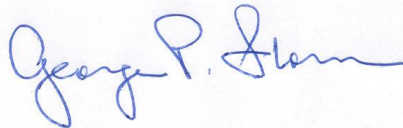
- It creates a designated Assistant U.S. Attorney in every federal district around the country to be responsible for ensuring that cases are identified and prosecuted, and a designated official in Justice Department headquarters to oversee and ensure the coordination of these nationwide efforts.
- It strengthens the collection of reports and cases involving elder abuse, and training of investigators.

¹ <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/consumer-protection/preventing-elder-abuse>.

- It creates a designated official in the Federal Trade Commission to coordinate FTC efforts and provide a point of contact for assisting individuals and federal, state, and local government agencies with identifying and responding to elder abuse.
- It amends the Senior Citizens Against Marketing Scams (SCAMS) Act of 1994, which currently provides enhanced criminal penalties and mandatory restitution for fraudulent telemarketing schemes targeting older Americans, to also provide the same enhanced penalties when the schemes are perpetrated by means of the Internet.

We urge the Committee to move forward with this important legislation to strengthen the legal protections provided to older consumers against telemarketing and Internet fraud.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George P. Slover". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

George P. Slover
Senior Policy Counsel
Consumers Union