



Testimony of Nicholas Weilhammer
Submitted to the
United States Senate Special Committee on Aging
On
“Issues Facing Seniors: Retirement Security, Healthcare, & Fiscal Health”
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Thank you, Chairman Bob Casey, Ranking Member Senator Tim Scott, and members of the Committee, and to Senator Rick Scott. My name is Nicholas Weilhammer, and it is my honor to serve as the Associate Deputy Attorney General for Enforcement for Attorney General Ashley Moody.

To reiterate the remarks of Attorney General Ashley Moody, the Attorney General's office sees a number of threats to seniors and their retirement savings, healthcare and overall fiscal health. Government imposters, charity scams, identify theft, coronavirus scams, romance scams, and tech support scams are just a few of the scams perpetrated on our seniors.

Having a skilled team of professionals to receive complaints by seniors, such as Attorney General Moody's Senior Protection Team, has proved essential to enforcement. While state attorneys general have powerful enforcement tools, it is crucial to have a dedicated team that is qualified to spot senior issues, and address the complainant's physical or mental disabilities, if present. This improved consumer intake process has resulted into millions of dollars in recoveries through her enforcement actions.

As one example, Attorney General Moody took action to shut down a water filter company falsely promising to treat serious medical conditions. This company falsely claimed that use of its molecular hydrogen water machines could assist in ailments ranging from cancer, depression, diabetes, lupus, skin disorders and other chronic diseases.

These high-priced products—ranging from \$6,700 to almost \$10,000—came with false promises of wide-ranging health benefits and attractive financing. As part of the company's marketing strategy, it offered a case study program that purportedly provided customers with monthly compensation payments in exchange for providing positive feedback about the machines. The company claimed the payments would offset some, or all, of the financing costs of the filter system. According to consumer complaints, the company did not provide the promised compensation, sent checks sporadically, mailed consumers worthless checks or the checks stopped altogether.

We encourage Floridians to be vigilant and stay apprised of the latest scams, which can change rapidly in complexity and scope. Attorney General Moody's Consumer Alert program is designed to inform the public of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, trends in consumer complaints and other deceptive practices utilized to take advantage of Floridians.

There are also opportunities for Floridians to volunteer as a Senior Sleuth. Seniors vs. Crime is a special project of the Florida Attorney General's Office run by seniors who volunteer to help victims of senior-targeted crimes, or deceptive or unfair trade practices. Senior Sleuths assist older Floridians by reviewing complaints, pursuing restitution for consumers, providing advice to vulnerable populations and informing others of common scams.

I thank the committee for its important work in studying and highlighting these issues and for allowing me the opportunity to share enforcement actions taken by Attorney General Ashley Moody's office.