

Giovanni's Journal

A publication of Texas State Representative Giovanni Capriglione

Vol. 3, Issue 3

April 2016

The Need for Financial Elder Abuse Legislation

Originally written for, and printed in the Texas Blaze.

By Giovanni Capriglione

Between sessions, the Texas House holds interim committee hearings on a variety of topics – listening, learning, and preparing. During a recent Investments & Financial Services committee hearing in Austin, we were presented with information and discussion on a growing problem, financial abuse of our elderly. The scope of this threat is vast – and unfortunately – rarely reported. We heard testimony that 1 in 5 Americans aged 65 or older have been victims of financial abuse. This fraud is broken down into two main buckets: fraud by strangers, and fraud by family and friends. Fraud by strangers has been notoriously difficult to stop with many cases initiated overseas, and the money stolen is almost never recovered. Fraud by family and caregivers usually remains hidden – the victims may feel embarrassed or they may not wish to put their close ones in legal jeopardy.

Here is a list of some of the most popular scams today – but in general, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

- **The Jamaican Lottery Scam:** Frauds call U.S. senior citizens kindly explaining they have won a large sum through the lottery, and all they must do to collect the sum is pay upfront processing fees or taxes. As the most common and successful scam yet, the Jamaican Lottery Scam is responsible for \$300 million in losses annually.
- **The Nigerian Letter Fraud:** Senior citizens receive letters or emails in which they are given the “opportunity” to share in a portion of money the letter sender is trying to send out of Nigeria or another foreign country. Typically, the senior citizen is asked for bank information for ease of transfer.
- **Contest Scams:** Similar to the Jamaican Lottery Scam, senior citizens are told they have won a large sum of money

or expensive product (like a new Mercedes) and all they must do to receive their prize is pay taxes on the prize.

- **Non-existent Investment Products:** Frauds are often attempting to sell seniors investments products over the phone that simply do not exist. One example is the “Merrill Gold Safety Reserve” which was found by financial advisors to be a scam.
- **Abuse by family members and friends:** Most financial abuse in the U.S. is committed by family members, caregivers and friends - 55% of all financial abuse, to be exact. This type of abuse is often characterized by out of character payment requests or aggressive tactics to transfer the power of attorney.

While each individual should be wary of suspicious emails and take care to protect their own assets, the perpetrators of these crimes also prey on adults with disabilities. Potential legislation that your Texas House will take up next session include: a centralized agency managing reports of suspicious activities, additional ability for financial institutions to temporarily hold suspicious disbursements, additional counterfeit protections for cashier's checks, and the ability for financial services companies to reach out to close family members when there is a concern about exploitation.

If you suspect fraud, or believe that you or a loved one may have been a victim of financial abuse, please contact Adult Protective Services (800-252-5400), local law enforcement, or our offices. The information contained herein is provided by The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call 817-807-8010. Our office is located in Keller Town Hall on the second floor, and we would love to hear from you. Thank you again for allowing me the privilege to serve you in the Texas House.

Rep. Giovanni Capriglione
Texas House of Representatives
District 98



Capitol Address

Physical:

Texas Capitol Extension,
Room E2.714

Mailing:

P.O. Box 2910
Texas House of Representatives
Austin, TX 78768
512-463-0690

District Office

Physical:

1100 Bear Creek Parkway
Keller, TX 76248
817-807-8010

Mailing:

P.O. Box 770
Keller, TX 76244

SSG Alex Viola Foundation Donates to Military Organizations

The SSG Alex Viola Foundation (SSGAVF) was established in August 2015 to honor Staff Sergeant Alex Viola of Keller who lost his life to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) while defending his country in Shaw Wali Kot, Afghanistan in 2013. One of Alex's last requests was to support the Green Beret Foundation and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. As such, the SSGAVF provides support for fallen and wounded special operations warriors and their families.

On November 21, 2015, the SSGAVF held the first annual SSG Alex Viola Memorial Car Show and raised over \$20,000 for their cause. On March 4, 2016, the SSGAVF donated checks in the amount of \$10,000 each to the Green Beret Foundation and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

"There is a lot you can say about Alex. He was brave and put others before himself. He was brave as he wasn't ordered to do what he died doing. He did it because he recognized the threat and he always put his team before himself," said Lieutenant Colonel Tommy Ston-

er of the Special Operation Task Force Command.

The SSGAVF will hold their second annual SSG Alex Viola Memorial Car Show on November 5, 2016 at Keller Town Hall, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information about the SSG Alex Viola Foundation, including photo galleries, news, and donation information, please visit ssgalexviola.org.



Members of the Viola family present a check to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation on March 4, 2016.

April Events in District 98

- **April 7: Westlake's Free MasterWorks Concert - Brave Combo** 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Marriott Solana's Plaza Courtyard located at 1301 Solana Boulevard, Building 4.
- **April 9: Keller's Alliance for Children Police Bike Race to End Child Abuse** 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Keller Town Hall located at 1100 Bear Creek Parkway. The evening will offer food and drinks, prize drawings, sponsor booths, and a 5.7 mile bike ride through the streets and trails of Keller with the top three fastest riders in each race receiving a medal. The citizen bike race begins at 3:30 p.m., the police bike race (open to police officers only) begins at 4:30 p.m., and the awards ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m.
- **April 9: Grapevine's Don't Mess with Texas Trash-Off** 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Grapevine. Volunteers hit the streets and trails to collect trash and recycling. The community-wide cleanup ends with a celebration lunch and prizes. For more information, call 817-410-3490 or email charris@grapevinetexas.gov.
- **April 15-16: Keller Fest**
- **April 16: Keller's Texas SmartScape Plant Sale** 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Home Depot located at 2013 Highway 377 in Keller. The City of Keller is a partner of the Texas SmartScape program and will host a Water Conserving Plant Sale offering deals on select native and adapted plants. Shoppers will have the opportunity to talk with experts and get ideas and tips for landscaping in North Texas. Learn more at www.txsmartscape.com.
- **April 21: Westlake's Free MasterWorks Concert - Me & My Monkey** 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Marriott Solana's Plaza Courtyard located at 1301 Solana Boulevard, Building 4.
- **April 22-24: Southlake's Art in the Square** all day at Southlake Town Square. Presented by the Southlake Women's Club. Join for the fine arts festival, entertainment, and activities for the whole family. Visit www.artinthesquare.com for more information.
- **April 26: Southlake's Meet the Mayor** 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Pro Core Fitness located at 275 Commerce Street in Southlake. This informal meet and greet is held monthly with Mayor Laura Hill at different locations around Southlake.
- **April 28: Southlake's Evening with the Author: Charlene Harris** 6 p.m. at the Marq Southlake located at 285 Shady Oaks Drive. Charlene Harris is a New York Times bestselling author who has been writing for over thirty years.
- **April 29-30: Colleyville's Old Tyme BBQ** 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday, April 29 and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 30 at Colleyville Center, located at 5301 Riverwalk Drive. This two-day event is filled with good eats for a good cause, Texas Special Olympics. On April 29, there will be a free catfish fry along with live music, and on April 30, a barbeque competition for judges. For details, call 817-503-1111.



If you are not currently receiving Giovanni's Journal and would like to subscribe (or unsubscribe), please email district98.capriglione@house.state.tx.us.



The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163.