



## OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**TO:** Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk

**FROM:** Councilmember Manny Pelaez, Council District 8

**COPIES:** Erik Walsh, City Manager; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Joe Frank Picazo, Interim Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to the City Council

**SUBJECT:** Elder Fraud Prevention Program

**DATE:** June 11, 2024

### Issue for Proposed Consideration

I respectfully request for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee.

Requesting the creation of a comprehensive Elder Fraud Prevention Program that:

1. Creates a city-wide education campaign to help our senior community recognize common scams, seek assistance, and report fraud.
2. Creates an Elder Fraud Taskforce that works jointly to investigate, prosecute, and better understand the financial scams targeting older adults. The task force would include the following stakeholders:
  - a. SAPD;
  - b. Office of the City Attorney;
  - c. District Attorney's Office;
  - d. Federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Veterans Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Postal Service;
  - e. Bexar County Sherriff's Office;
  - f. Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid;
  - g. Internet Service Providers;
  - h. Utility providers;
  - i. Older Adults Technology Services (OATS); and
  - j. Representatives from local banks and credit unions.

The Taskforce should submit an annual report of its activities and finding to the City Council and provide advice on how to better serve and protect or senior residents as it relates to elder fraud.

Additionally, the Elder Fraud Taskforce should gather input from relevant non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and affected seniors to better inform its recommendations to City Council.

3. Requires the City Manager to include elder fraud prevention as a priority in COSA's state and federal legislative agendas.

Brief Background

The magnitude and frequency of elder fraud incidents have grown at an alarming rate. San Antonio's older residents from every Council district are being targeted by criminals from throughout the globe. San Antonio seniors are in dire need of our support.

According to the Federal Trade Commission's annual fraud report from 2023, reported theft through fraud in the United States exceeded \$10 billion for the first time ever. This figure represents a 14% increase compared to the previous year's reports and is five times greater than the losses reported in 2019.

Local data further highlights the gravity of this issue. In 2023, the San Antonio Police Department received over 8,000 fraud reports, outnumbering reported burglary cases.

Elderly individuals are prime targets for various forms of fraudulent activities, mainly due to accumulated wealth, poor financial literacy, and cognitive declines associated with aging. Specifically, our Latino population, while particularly vulnerable to elder fraud due to language barriers and cultural factors, is less likely to report incidents compared to other demographic groups.<sup>1</sup> This reluctance to report can exacerbate the problem and perpetuate cycles of victimization.

Despite numerous preventive measures from the city, county, and state, elder fraud remains a persistent and growing threat in need of preventative actions.



Submitted for Council consideration by:

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Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (exactly 4)

District

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|----|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. | <u>M.R. Whyte</u>  | <u>10</u> |
| 2. | <u>L. G. Soto</u>  | <u>7</u>  |
| 3. | <u>[Signature]</u> | <u>5</u>  |
| 4. | <u>[Signature]</u> | <u>4</u>  |

<sup>1</sup> DeLierna, "Financial fraud among older Americans: Evidence and implications."

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