

that meet criteria related to the inclusion of underrepresented minority individuals in programs and activities.

NIMHD leads scientific research to improve minority health and eliminate health disparities by researching and evaluating all minority health and health disparities research at NIH.

The NIMHD's Centers of Excellence (COE)'s program fosters collaborative research in minority health and health disparities, and awards grants to institutions that have a specific unifying focus on addressing minority health and health disparities.

NIMHD Centers of Excellence program grants are awarded in order to:

Support innovative multi- and trans-disciplinary research to promote minority health and reduce health disparities;

Strengthen exemplary research training and education activities support the development of well-trained researchers from minority and health disparity populations;

Increase the number of individuals from minority and other health disparity populations participating in research activities; and

Provide support for engaging minority and other health disparity communities in effective and sustainable activities aimed at improving the health of their communities.

Racial health inequalities in the U.S. is the cumulative result of both past and present discrimination throughout U.S. culture, and the NIMHD centers of racial excellence program grants are essential to addressing these inequalities.

African Americans are not only more susceptible to disease and illness, they are also more likely to die from them.

This past year, as COVID-19 has ravaged African Americans and communities of color, we have seen firsthand the fruits of these inequalities.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), African Americans face increased risks if they are stricken with COVID-19, including asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and pulmonary illness.

African American lives are placed at greater risk because of a health care system that denies access to the poor and work conditions that have long neglected conditions that leave them with a higher incidence of diseases that for far too long have gone under diagnosed and untreated.

There are many reasons for this but they include the refusal of several states to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act; the resistance of small business employers to provide health care to workers until required by their state government to do so, and too little access to medical doctors who are trained to provide care to this COVID-19 at-risk population.

Since 2003, I have been working on major legislation to address the problem with several of my colleagues including Representatives Elijah E. Cummings, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Delegate Donna Christensen, Chair of the CBC Health Braintrust, U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, and the leadership of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the Native American Caucus.

Together we produced, the "Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act of 2003," a truly comprehensive bill designed to address the disparities that face our communities.

During my time in office, I have fully and eagerly supported all legislation that has given increased attention to HIV/AIDS, including the Ryan White CARE Act, which is currently slated to receive about \$2.2 billion in funding for FY2007.

I have supported legislation to reauthorize funding for community health centers (H.R. 5573, Health Centers Renewal Act of 2006), including the Montrose and Fourth Ward clinics in my home city of Houston, as well as supported legislation to provide more nurses for the poor urban communities in which many of these centers are located (H.R. 1285, Nursing Relief Act for Disadvantaged Areas).

I have also supported and introduced legislation aimed to better educate our children (H.R. 2553, Responsible Education About Life Act in 2006) and eliminate health disparities (H.R. 3561, Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act and the Good Medicine Cultural Competency Act in 2003, H.R. 90).

Mr. Speaker, we need strong collaborations and research based upon asking the right questions in specific areas, and the COEs are poised to emphasize scientific inquiry that will promote health equity.

Government has an obligation to seek the best for our nation's people, especially our nation's children.

I urge all members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 189, the John Lewis NIMHD Research Endowment Revitalization Act of 2021, because improved public health benefits all Americans, no matter who they are or where they are from.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. GUY RESCHENTHALER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I was detained during the vote series on April 14, 2021. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. S. 578.

PROTECTING INDIAN TRIBES FROM SCAMS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1762, the "Protecting Indian Tribes from Scams Act," which requires the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), after consultation with Indian tribes, to report on unfair or deceptive practices that target tribes or tribal members.

The FTC must submit the report to Congress and make it publicly available.

The FTC is directed to update its website to include information for consumers and businesses on identifying and avoiding unfair or deceptive practices that target tribes or tribal members.

Scammers are targeting Native people.

Scammers may say extra money is waiting for a small price upfront or that a testing kit or treatment for the coronavirus is available for a fee.

Other scams attempt to benefit from the \$1,200 Economic Impact Payment coming to most U.S. citizens; and more are expected to target stimulus checks authorized under the America Rescue Plan.

At least one tribal leader has warned tribal citizens of an email scam related to the coronavirus.

In an April 14 Facebook post, Ojibwe Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin wrote that an email purporting to be her had tribal citizens to purchase gift cards to help a citizen who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Benjamin asks those that may have received the scam email from a Gmail account to contact tribal police.

This bill will help protect our diverse Native American communities from scammers by providing valuable information that will help identify fraudsters and arm people with tools to protect themselves.

Our friends in the Native American communities across the nation have faced tremendous challenges during COVID-19 and they need our help to keep their nation's physically and financial safe during COVID.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

HOUSE RESOURCES REPUBLICAN FORUM

**HON. DON YOUNG**

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, it is a unique responsibility to be the sole Congressman for Alaska in the House of Representatives.

It's easy for legislators to forget that life is different in Alaska, and it is my highest priority to ensure that Alaskans are not overlooked here in Washington, D.C.

One of the principal lessons I have learned in my years of service are the check and balances between the three branches of government inscribed by our Founding Fathers in our Constitution.

While the President of the United States governs the Executive Branch, Congress writes our laws and that's something we too often forget here.

Article I of the Constitution states: "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives."

That said the President can only enforce legislation that Congress has drafted and approved.

The real power of this country lies within this Capitol building and we need to act like it.

For over 48 years I have worked tirelessly to address the crucial infrastructure and energy needs throughout Alaska.

Before being elected to public office, I saw firsthand Alaska's lack of traditional infrastructure while I was a tug and barge operator along the Yukon River.

But I could also see the potential economic development that communities and rural villages could achieve if they were given the resources to put ideas into action.

It is that driving knowledge that guides me as I work to support federal investment in Alaska's energy infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the Biden Administration is continuing Obama-era attacks against Alaska.

By reviewing federal rules that support Alaska and by placing a moratorium on energy development in ANWR, President Biden seems intent to surrender to his party's environmental extremists.

I want the President to know this: Alaskans have shown for decades that energy development and environmental protection can go hand in hand.

The executive actions he has taken in his first days in office serve only to hinder our state's economy, stifle energy independence, and prevent the Alaska Native community of Kaktovik from responsibly using their lands.

Tomorrow I will be proudly introducing Alaska's own Mathew Rexford, at the House Natural Resources Republican Forum titled, "Where are the Jobs?"

Mr. Rexford is the President of the Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation and a strong leader.

The Alaska community of Kaktovik has long advocated for access to their lands and the opening of ANWR.

Development in the 1002 Area of ANWR would create countless jobs, revenue streams, provide for infrastructure and improve the health and economic well-being of the indigenous people.

While the United States should continue working to reduce emissions, doing so in a way that denies the opportunity for incremental improvements and technological innovations over time is unreasonable.

Resource development in ANWR would be a major win for our nation's energy independence and security for decades to come.

I'm proud to stand with my friend Mathew Rexford to ensure that Kaktovik is heard on this issue.

I hope that the administration will listen and engage with native leaders like Mathew Rexford and I look forward to our forum tomorrow.

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PROTECTING SENIORS FROM  
EMERGENCY SCAMS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 14, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 446, the "Protecting Seniors from Emergency Scams Act," which requires the Federal Trade Commission to report on, and increase awareness regarding, scams targeting older adults.

The FTC must: report on the number and type of scams that target older adults and provide policy recommendations to prevent such scams; revise the commission's web portal with current information about such scams, including contact information for law enforcement and protective services agencies; and coordinate with media outlets and law enforcement to disseminate such information.

Our seniors should not be victims of scams during coronavirus pandemic.

This bipartisan legislation will help protect seniors from fraud during this public health crisis and prevent emergency-related scams in the future.

Every year scam artists target senior citizens resulting in financial losses between \$2

billion and \$12 billion, and now during the COVID-19 pandemic, these scammers are using fear and uncertainty to take advantage of our vulnerable populations.

Our seniors have borne the brunt of this pandemic in high infection rates and deaths.

Now many seniors are being targeted by scammers who prey on their COVID-19 fears.

We must pass this bill and work to educate our seniors and those who care for them to look out for scams.

There is a moral obligation to stop these con artists by empowering seniors with facts and information while aggressively targeting criminals with all the resources available through the Federal Trade Commission.

Throughout the pandemic, uncertainty has led to many Houstonians falling victim to scam callers especially vulnerable populations like seniors.

Houston police and the Harris County District Attorney have made an arrest in an international cyber-scam that bilked unsuspecting, mostly elderly victims out of more than \$1 million.

One victim of the scam, Asuncion Peppers, 74, a retired medical technician knows that first hand; She was bilked out of her life savings.

Hackers contacted Ms. Peppers on Facebook, pretending to be one of her Facebook friends.

She was told she was eligible for a government grant of almost one million dollars and all she had to do was send a check to pay taxes.

Investigators believes the scammers were operating from Nigeria, defrauding senior citizens in the U.S. and around the world.

Before Peppers realized she was being conned, she sent checks totaling \$87,000 hard-earned money.

She said that she worked three jobs to build her life savings.

In her case the person who received the funds was 65-year-old Joe Reyes, who washed the funds through several local banks.

Reyes was receiving funds from scams and then converting them into Bitcoin to send back to the scammers.

Peppers and her husband are just two of 38 victims bilked out of more than \$1.3 million before the fraud was discovered.

Reyes is now charged with money laundering and other charges that could send him to prison for years.

Our seniors need our help to be physically and financial safe during COVID.

The Protecting Seniors from Emergency Scams Act is endorsed by the Elder Justice Coalition; American Society on Aging; and the National Adult Protective Services Association.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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NICHOLAS AND ZACHARY BURT  
MEMORIAL CARBON MONOXIDE  
POISONING PREVENTION ACT OF  
2021

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 14, 2021*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1460, the "Nicholas

and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2021", named after two young Minnesotan brothers who died of carbon monoxide poisoning, which directs the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to award grants to states and tribal organizations to install carbon monoxide alarms in the homes of low-income families and older adults and facilities that commonly serve children or older adults.

The Nicholas and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act would also authorize the CPSC to establish a federal grant program to fund education and installation of CO detectors by state, local and tribal governments.

With better, commonsense safeguards in place, we can address the danger of accidental death by carbon monoxide poisoning, which represents a real danger for individuals and families.

According to the Center for Disease Control, at least 430 people in the U.S. die each year from carbon monoxide poisoning and approximately 50,000 people are forced to seek medical attention for accidental CO poisoning.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is an unimaginable way to die—it prevents blood from being able to buy into oxygen; causing suffocation while still being able to breathe.

Mr. Speaker, the devastating and unprecedented winter storm in Texas finally gave this important issue the national attention it deserves; but it came at the cost of the lives and health of Texans.

The plunging temperatures and persistent power outages this past / February found residents in my district searching for warmth increasingly from dangerous sources.

In one dark week in February, fire departments in Harris County alone responded to over 475 carbon monoxide calls.

During this week, like millions of Texans, Etenesh Mersha lost power during the storm.

In order to provide warmth for herself, her husband, and their two children, she turned on her car in an attached garage, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning for herself and her family.

Etenesh left the car running, and by the time help arrived, she and her daughter, Rakeb, died; Her husband and 8-year-old son were rushed to the hospital and survived.

A mother and daughter died while trying to stay warm because regulators in Texas had decided to forgo federal and state regulation.

At least 300 other cases of carbon monoxide poisoning, were reported in Harris County, making it a disaster within a disaster.

Although carbon monoxide is not visible, there are concrete ways we can protect against this unseen threat, including for those who are most vulnerable, like children and the elderly.

This legislation bolsters states' efforts to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and help prevent these tragedies in Texas and across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, the CPSC must take action to better educate and inform families about the risks associated with improper methods to heat and power homes and work with the media to share this critical information.

I urge all members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 1460, the Nicholas and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2021, because the tragic deaths in Texas has shown that this danger must be addressed.