

*President Goolsbee's opening remarks, as prepared for delivery at the Chicago Fed's April 3, 2024 virtual event, Preventing Elder Financial Exploitation.*

Good morning, I am Austan Goolsbee, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Welcome to our event, "Preventing Elder Financial Exploitation: Research, Policies, and Strategies."

There has been a disturbing rise in elderly individuals losing substantial amounts of money to frauds, scams, and exploitations. The perpetrators prey on people's trust and unfamiliarity with technology or with financial matters generally.

And the elderly can suffer greater harm because many have left the workforce and have limited ability to absorb financial losses. It's especially difficult for less well-off seniors for whom falling for a financial scam can be unrecoverably devastating. The threat has magnified as technology has advanced and internet usage by the elderly has increased.

The topic of Elder Financial Exploitation is one that we were eager to address and why we have pulled together an important group of experts today:

- We have heard many similar tales from lots of different people around the District about parents or grandparents getting targeted—and from banks telling us they are spending more and more time working to prevent their customers from getting exploited. In a polarized time, this problem seems to span all sorts of divides.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago cares because our stated mission is to promote "a healthy, stable, and inclusive economy and financial system for our region and nation, where all have the opportunity to thrive." Helping elderly Americans and the people who love and support them to protect their hard-earned financial resources is a key part of that mission.

Today, our presenters will highlight data on the growing prevalence of reported scams. And that understates the problem because people are often simply too embarrassed to admit that they've fallen for fraud, so underreporting is rife.

Our goal today is to better understand this important subject—and to perhaps leave you with some ideas on how you can keep such fraud from touching your

own lives. We begin with two researchers, Bhash Mazumder from the Chicago Fed and Marti DeLiema from the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, who will share what they've learned.

Then we move to our power panel. The experts we've gathered will aim to shed light on the subject, discuss challenges faced by those attempting to address it, and share promising practices in the field.

I thank you for your time and attention this morning, I remind you to guard your passwords, and I am very pleased to welcome Bhash Mazumder to begin the discussion.