

clear, yet they soon would be replaced by different cries. With hearts of fire, the students would not back down to words of warning. The air of freedom was faintly tangible but soon dissipated as the piercing crack of gunfire drove fear back into the hearts of the young people. Shot down . . . beaten . . . imprisoned . . . in one way or another they were all silenced. And the freedom, once so close, was now ripped from their hands.

This tragedy can conjure up a lot of emotions. For me, all I can do is feel grateful. Surely I have taken for granted the freedom of a democracy. I have the privilege to stand up and not be pushed down. I don't have to look over my shoulder in fear every time I speak up about the government. I have a voice. But what is so beautiful about America's democracy is that this voice is just as important, just as valid as the next man's. Though led by presidents, governors, senators, and representatives, I have just as much power to speak out as they do. My voice matters.

Our forefathers designed the United States Constitution to keep the government from ever becoming so powerful, so tyrannical, that I no longer have the freedom to speak my mind. At the same time, the constitution keeps me in line and helps remind me of what is important to our democracy, so that I fight for ideas that are true, right, and noble.

Personally, I've only recently begun to see how powerful my voice is, even though it is just one. A project was assigned in my political science class in which I needed to interview various state representative and senators. I was surprised at how easy it was to schedule an appointment with an elected official. When I was sitting in the office of my representative, my eyes were opened to the power of my own voice. I used to believe that my voice meant nothing because I wasn't old enough to vote. But what is amazing to me now is that I'm able to walk straight into our state's capital building, climb a few stairs, enter right into an office of a senator or representative, and explain to them exactly what I believe and why I believe it. Not only that, our government allows what I say to be taken into consideration. I can persuade others to take up my passion, believe what I believe, and push for a change. Though funded in basic principles, democracy is not set in stone. If I don't agree with something, I have the ability to work to change it. America, the world's largest democracy, will take time to listen to what I have to say.

Because my voice in our democracy matters so much, I hold a tremendous respect for the United States of America. I see the value in a peaceful transition of leadership. I see the value of a "majority rules" policy. I see the value of my voice. Therefore, I will not sit back when I have such freedom in my grasp. I will use my voice to make our democracy a better place to be. In the words of Edward Everett Hale, "I am only one, but still I am one . . . I cannot do everything, but I can do something. . . and what I can do, I should do . . . and, with the help of God, I will do."

INTRODUCTION OF THE "NIGERIAN ADVANCE FEE FRAUD PREVENTION ACT OF 1998"

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I am joining with a bipartisan group of colleagues in

roducing legislation to prevent further growth of the international crime, Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud.

Every day, thousands of Americans fall subject to get rich quick schemes. Unfortunately, Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud is a whole new era of scamming money out of innocent people. Known internationally as "4-1-9" fraud after the section in the Nigerian Penal Code which addresses fraud schemes, these scams have reached epidemic proportions.

As a personal target of such scams, I am introducing the Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud Prevention Act of 1998 to bring this swindle and its perpetrators into the forefront of the American public, and focus the Government on implementing a national and international strategy to combat these shams.

This form of bilk is widespread, targeting over 60 countries worldwide. The perpetrators of these hoax's don't discriminate when choosing their targets, everyone from small to large corporations, religious organizations, and individuals are all fair game to these criminals. I myself have been targeted four times by these filmlams in just over 7 months.

The perpetrators of this swindle will send letters to unknowing victims, mostly senior citizens, claiming that the Nigerian Government overpaid the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation on a contract. Instead of giving the money back to the government, the scammer indicates they need a foreign bank account to deposit \$50 million, of which 30% would remain in the victims' bank account for them to keep.

So, what is the actual scam? The scam does not actually require the transmission of a bank account number (although many victims obligingly provide it). The victim supplies a letterhead, which is used to forge letters of recommendation to the American Embassy for travel visas and it is also used to persuade other prospective victims.

They way they get money from the victims is much craftier. Victims are pressured into sending money for unforeseen taxes, fees to the Nigerian Government, and attorney fees. These fees can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars. The perpetrators of these scams often allege that the victim must travel to Nigeria in order to complete the transaction. If the victim is unable to travel to Nigeria, they proceed to demand more money from them for power of attorney fees and other associated taxes. Often when a victim does travel to Nigeria, the scammer explains to them that there is no need for a visa. In fact, a visa is required by the Nigerian Government. The perpetrators then bribe airport officials to bypass immigration, and use this illegal entry as leverage to coerce the traveler into releasing more money.

Violence and threats of physical harm may also occur. To date, 15 foreign businessmen and two United States citizens have been murdered in Nigeria in connection with a "4-1-9" scam. Perpetrators of these scams are rarely prosecuted or jailed by the Nigerian government, which is also suspected of playing a role in these schemes.

Money garnered from these schemes is used to fund other illegal activities, including drug trafficking or violent crimes. This is a growing concern to the international community, and among the thousands of Americans who fall victim to these scams.

The Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud Prevention Act of 1998 will direct the Secretary of

State and the Secretary of the Treasury to jointly report on actions taken by the Nigerian Government in apprehending the perpetrators of 4-1-9 scams, efforts taken by the United States to inform American about such schemes, and other such actions which are or should be undertaken to end of these schemes, including the imposition of sanctions on the Nigerian Government.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the World Health Organization. I want to congratulate them, and everyone else who has joined in the fight against infectious disease around the world. I also congratulate Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the recently-elected Director-General of the World Health Organization, who has announced her commitment to improving the lives and health of children around the world.

In the last five decades, human longevity worldwide has increased by more than 40% and the average life expectancy at birth rose from 46 years in the early 1950s to almost 65 years by 1996. These great strides forward in health would not have been possible without the efforts of WHO and their many local and international partners in the private, public and non-profit sectors.

In 1967, WHO started an ambitious effort to eliminate smallpox worldwide. At the time, no one believed that a disease which afflicted up to 15 million people annually could be eradicated in just thirteen years—but that's exactly what happened. According to WHO, if smallpox had not been eliminated in 1980, the past twenty years would have witnessed some 350 million new victims—roughly the combined population of the USA and Mexico—and an estimated 40 million deaths—a figure equal to the entire population of Spain or South Africa.

Today, close to 90% of children in the world are being reached by immunization services—a dramatic increase from the 5% vaccinated only twenty-five years ago. Two million deaths from measles alone are prevented worldwide every year by current immunization efforts. WHO, its Member States and international partners are conducting extensive immunization, treatment and prevention campaigns to end polio, malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, dracunculiasis, Chagas disease, and HIV/AIDS around the globe.

Unfortunately, this story is not entirely filled with happy tidings. Today, malnutrition is implicated in the deaths of seven million of the twelve million children who die of preventable causes each year. Many households around the world still lack access to safe drinking water and often use the same water supply for cooking and sanitation. Deaths from easily preventable, waterborne illnesses and the more elusive but equally deadly diseases like Ebola make the battle against infectious disease a war with many fronts.

To further complicate the picture, non-communicable diseases like cancer and heart disease—the leading causes of death in the