

## REMINDER FOR THE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS...

### Ohioans Report Surge of Tax-Related Phone Scams



(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today warned that his office has received more than 600 reports of tax-related scams since Sept. 1.

The scams generally begin with a phone call telling consumers they are in trouble with the IRS and must call an out-of-state number for more information. Eventually consumers are asked for money.

In one recent variation of the scam, a consumer receives a call from a “Steve Martin,” who claims to work for the U.S. Treasury Department. He says the consumer is facing federal charges and must call a specific phone number, often one with a 757 or 540 area code (Virginia). In another variation, a recorded message warns the consumer that this is the “final notice from the IRS” before a lawsuit will be filed.

Consumers who respond to the calls are instructed to send hundreds of dollars using money transfers or prepaid cards, which are commonly found at grocery or convenience stores. While most consumers do not send any money, a few have reported losing hundreds or thousands of dollars.

“Con artists rely on people becoming so nervous that they send money right away,” Attorney General DeWine said. “If you receive one of these calls, don’t respond and don’t send any money.”

#### Tips for consumers to avoid tax-related phone scams include:



- *Don't trust threatening callers.* If you receive an unexpected phone call from someone who threatens to arrest you for not paying taxes, be very skeptical, especially if you never received any written notice. Also don't trust someone who demands that you pay immediately via wire transfer or prepaid card. These are preferred payment methods for scam artists.
- *Don't respond to illegal robocalls in any way.* Don't interact with the caller, and don't call a number left on your phone or in a message. Responding to a scam call can result in even more calls because it lets con artists know that your phone number belongs to a real person.
- *Look into call-blocking options.* Check with your phone carrier and third-party services to determine whether call-blocking services could help you stop unwanted calls. (Attorney General DeWine has joined dozens of other attorneys general in encouraging phone carriers to use call-blocking technology to help consumers stop illegal telemarketing calls.)

U.S. Treasury or IRS impersonation scams can be reported to the **Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration** at [www.tigta.gov](http://www.tigta.gov) or **800-366-4484**.

Consumers also can contact the **Ohio Attorney General's Office** at [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov) or **800-282-0515** for assistance.

