

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILSON WARNS OF POTENTIAL FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS' STIMULUS CHECKS



(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – April 16, 2020 – South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson is warning senior citizens, other vulnerable adults and their families that federal stimulus checks could lead to financial exploitation of vulnerable citizens.

“Many vulnerable adults have family members or someone else handling their money for them, and this additional stimulus money will be a temptation for some,” Attorney General Wilson said.

The Omnibus Adult Protection Act protects vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. Under that Act, any resident of a nursing home, assisted living facility or residential facility operated by the S.C. Department of Mental Health or the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs is considered a “vulnerable adult.” Additionally, all vulnerable adults, whether they’re living in a facility or at a private home, are protected by the Adult Protection Act.

The law is clear that misuse or misappropriation of any stimulus funds of any vulnerable adult constitutes financial exploitation of the vulnerable adult and may result in investigation and, if appropriate, criminal prosecution. Financial exploitation is a felony and punishable by up to five years in prison. Attorney General Wilson concluded by saying that his office will investigate and prosecute persons who financially exploit our most vulnerable citizens who reside in nursing homes or other facilities.

Individuals who suspect financial exploitation should contact local law enforcement.



QUESTIONS? CALL SRI AT 803-252-7734

AVOID CORONAVIRUS SCAMS

Fraudsters are taking advantage of fears surrounding the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and targeting the elderly and vulnerable. This guide can help you protect yourself.

ROBOCALLS

Do not answer calls from unknown numbers. If you do pick up the phone, don't give out personal information and don't speak. Hang up as soon as you hear a recorded voice.

FAKE CURES

Do not buy or promote anything with claims to treat or prevent coronavirus. According to the CDC and FDA, there are no approved vaccines, drugs, or products currently available to treat or prevent the virus.

FAKE CHARITIES

Real charities do not require instant donations. If a charity asks for donations in cash, gift cards, or wire transfers – Do not send money.

HOME TEST KITS

Ignore offers for home test kits; if you think you have symptoms caused by the virus, contact your medical provider.

IMPERSONATION SCAMS

If you receive a call from a person claiming to be a government office who tells you that to receive stimulus money, you should provide them with your personal information, ignore it. Also, if you receive an email that tells you to click on link to a website, do not do it. **Stimulus funds will be sent automatically with no action required from most people.**

STAY IN THE KNOW

Contact trusted sources to confirm information is correct. For the most up-to-date information about the coronavirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov

REPORT CORONAVIRUS FRAUD

If you believe you were a victim of a scam, call local law enforcement.

You can also file a complaint by email or phone with:

National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF):

Phone: 1-866-720-5721

Email: disaster@leo.gov

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.cdc.gov

www.justice.gov/usao-sc

www.coronavirus.gov

www.scdhec.gov

www.fda.gov

www.consumer.sc.gov

www.ftc.gov/coronavirus

www.aging.sc.gov