

## CONSUMER ALERT NEWS RELEASE

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### NEW FLURRY OF FAKE IRS CALLS CLAIM NORTH DAKOTA VICTIMS

BISMARCK, ND - Scam artists have redoubled their efforts after recent frauds in North Dakota, warned Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

Although numerous warnings have been issued in the last three years about the fake IRS enforcement calls, there have been several recent reports across the state of people falling victim to the scam and losing thousands of dollars.

Stenehjem reminds North Dakotans that these calls are not legitimate. "This is a well-known scam. The IRS does not use threatening phone calls to notify taxpayers of potential problems with their tax return," he said.

The scam artists pretend to be IRS enforcement agents and claim the only way the victim can avoid being arrested is to pay off the alleged tax debt immediately. The scam usually involves reloadable prepaid cards, but recent North Dakota victims report being instructed to buy hundreds of dollars in iTunes and other name brand gift cards. When the phony enforcement agent calls back and the victims read off the numbers from the back of the cards, the scam artist is able to go online and instantly empty the money from the cards. Another recent victim deposited almost \$9,000 into a third party's bank account designated by the con artist. There is no way to recover any of the money for the victims.

Stenehjem asks residents not to call his office just to report having received one of these scam messages because the scam calls originate from outside the United States and it falls under federal jurisdiction. The United States Treasury is tracking the scam calls.

- If you receive a phony IRS call, report it to United States Treasury at **1-800-366-4484**, or email [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

"Unfortunately, this scam is still finding victims. Those victims are at risk for future scams, because the con artists sell a victim's contact information to other scammers. If you have fallen victim to this scam, please contact my office immediately," said Stenehjem. Scam victims should call the Consumer Protection division at 800-472-2600.

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