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Contact Communications

Phone (850) 245-0150



Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Stands with Law Enforcement to Protect Seniors from Fraud

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— Today, Attorney General Uthmeier, Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Mark Glass, Florida Department of Corrections Secretary Ricky Dixon, Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister, and Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey announced that Florida conducted surprise search and seizure operations in three state prisons at once looking for contraband. The searches result from increased reports of inmates targeting seniors with fraudulent schemes from behind bars.

"Florida is the #1 state to retire, and we have a duty to protect the seniors living out their golden years across this state," said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. "While our prosecutors are working with Florida's Sheriffs to investigate and prosecute these criminals, my office is also coordinating with the Florida Department of Corrections to ramp up surprise inspections and lock down our prison system."

"Let me be clear—if you target our seniors, we will target you. We will investigate you, arrest you, and ensure you face the full weight of the law," said **Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister**. "Protecting our elderly isn't optional; it's our moral obligation. I want to thank the Attorney General for partnering with us and showing his commitment to holding those accountable who prey on our most vulnerable."

"Florida's seniors are our most precious of citizens, which unfortunately also makes them prime targets for those who commit fraud!!," said **Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey**. "Under the direction of Florida's Attorney General James Uthmeier, local and state law enforcement agencies are going after those who prey upon our seniors with one strong message—mess around and find out what happens to you if you target seniors in Florida!"

"This operation sends a clear message: Florida will not allow its prisons to be hijacked by criminal enterprises," said **Florida Department of Corrections Secretary Ricky Dixon**.

"Contraband cellphones are not just security risks—they're weapons used to exploit, extort, and endanger lives far beyond prison walls. We've taken decisive action, and we welcome more authority from Congress to do even more to stop this threat before it claims more victims."

"Florida is the number one state for retirement, but that also makes us a prime target for criminals who prey on seniors," said **Florida Department of Law Enforcement Mark Glass**.

"Our FDLE agents and analysts, working with the Attorney General's Office, will find you even if you're hiding in cyberspace. It's our job to make sure these lowlife thieves are brought to light in

the Sunshine State.”

The searches resulted in the recovery of the contraband below:

- 39 cellphones;
- 8 SIM cards;
- 10 batteries;
- 94 chargers;
- 4 WiFi hotspots;
- 10 pairs of earbuds;
- 3 SD cards.

Scammers and fraudsters often target senior victims. To avoid falling victim to fraudulent schemes, Attorney General Uthmeier offers the following tips to older Floridians:

- Beware of high-pressure tactics used by callers or solicitors;
- Consult with trusted family members or friends about any suspicious calls, emails, or requests for information;
- Do not provide personal information to anyone you do not know;
- Monitor financial accounts regularly for any suspicious activity and
- Be cautious of suspicious emails or links in text messages.

Attorney General Uthmeier’s office provides many resources to help seniors learn how to spot and avoid falling victim to scams. The Attorney General’s Office’s Scams at a Glance program offers free, easy-to-share brochures covering many new or typical schemes. Topics range from grandparent scams to contractor fraud and more. To view the resources, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ScamsAtAGlance.

Floridians can report possible scams to Attorney General Uthmeier’s Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

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