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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Beware of New Year's Resolution Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is cautioning Floridians undertaking New Year's resolutions to be aware of scammers that may target those with big goals. Many resolutions are commonly shared among citizens, allowing fraudsters to easily predict targets to rip off, ruining resolutions before they even begin. Attorney General Moody advises Floridians to be alert when purchasing memberships, products or services to help achieve common resolutions.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The beginning of a new year is a popular time to set goals, but do your research before signing up for memberships or purchasing products to help you succeed. Scammers may try to exploit the situation to sell unproven products or just flat-out steal your personal or financial information."

Here are some common New Year's resolutions and tips to avoid scams related to these popular goals:

- Lose Weight and Live Healthier
  - Many people purchase a gym membership to begin the new year, but be sure to take proper precautions when signing any contract. To access the Better Business Bureau's Joining a Gym Guide, click here.
  - An estimated 45 million Americans begin a diet every year and bogus diet products and programs rank number one at the top of all health care scams reported to the Federal Trade Commission. To access more information about weight-loss scams

from the AARP, click here.
    - Fitness enthusiasts may also invest in gym equipment to help achieve their resolution to become healthier. For information on how to avoid these home gym scams, click here.

- Improve Organization
    - Organization apps can help simplify life and have become more popular on the app store. As a result, online stores contain apps that may not be as advertised. To access the Warning Flags to Help You Find Fraudulent Apps guide released by AARP, click here.
- Picking Up Skills or Hobbies
    - Picking up a new skill or hobby is a great self-challenge, but investing in a new activity can be risky. Scammers may release phishing websites, mimicking legitimate websites, about popular hobbies or products associated with the activity to obtain personal and financial information from consumers.
    - Click here to view Attorney General Moody's Consumer Alert on phishing websites.
- Saving and Investing Money
    - In 2021, the FTC received more than 2.1 million fraud reports about bank scams from consumers. Staying financially secure is a great goal to have, but make sure proper precautions are taken to protect financial information. Forbes Advisor has released a list of common banking scams to be aware of. To access the list, click here.
    - Investing is a common way for consumers to increase financial gains. The FTC issued a guide for consumers to invest correctly and report investment scams. To access the guide, click here.

Attorney General Moody's Consumer Alert program is designed to inform the public of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, trends in consumer complaints and other deceptive practices utilized to take advantage of Floridians. To learn more and to access recent Consumer Alerts, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.

To report a New Year's resolution scam, contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com. To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.