Aug 5, 2021

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Beware of Back-to-School Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—With the Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday ending on Monday, Aug. 9, Attorney General Ashley Moody is warning Floridians that scammers may target parents and students preparing for the return to school. More students will be back in the classroom this year and school supplies may be in short supply, forcing more people to search online for the necessary items. As a result, fraudulent advertisements may be seen more frequently on social media. There have also been reports from the Better Business Bureau of an increase in scam emails and phone calls offering student loan forgiveness plans.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As a mother, I know firsthand that sending your kids back to school is an exciting, yet stressful event. It takes a lot of planning and shopping to make sure your student has the supplies they need to succeed in the classroom. Scammers may try to exploit the back-to-school shopping rush through fraudulent ads on social media or through direct email solicitations. Don’t fall for their tricks and report any suspicious activity to my office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.”

To avoid back-to-school scams, Attorney General Moody encourages students and parents to keep these tips in mind:

- Use a credit card when shopping online for additional consumer protections;

- Before providing sensitive information online, make sure the website is secure by identifying a padlock symbol by the URL or the *https*;
- Reach out to a trusted loan servicer to ask about the legitimacy of student loan forgiveness plan offers; and
- Know that legitimate companies will never solicit personal or sensitive information over the phone, by email or by text.

Additionally, child identity theft is something that all parents must be wary of. Child identity theft occurs when a criminal uses a child's personal information to commit fraud. The Federal Trade Commission provides a webpage with information that advises against oversharing your child's Social Security number and asks parents to protect documents that contain a child's personal information.

Florida's Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday ends Monday, Aug. 9. The holiday allows consumers to be exempt from sales tax when purchasing qualifying back-to-school supplies. Find out more information here.

Anyone who encounters a back-to-school scam, or any other type of fraud, can file a complaint with the Florida Attorney General's Office online at MyFloridaLegal.com or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

# # #

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.