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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Sponsors 2020 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Resolution



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today announced a resolution recognizing June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Originated by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse in 2006, the day acknowledges elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Since being elected Attorney General, one of my top priorities has been protecting Florida’s seniors from fraud and abuse. With the highest population of 65 years or older per capita in the country, it is essential that we provide seniors with the safety and dignity to enjoy their golden years. That is the mission behind the Senior Protection Team I created soon after taking office. Sponsoring this resolution is another step in my commitment to doing everything within my power to protect older Floridians.”

To view a copy of the resolution, click here.

Last year, Attorney General Moody created the Senior Protection Team to identify, investigate and eliminate fraud harming Florida’s seniors.

The Senior Protection Team is comprised of leading members from the Attorney General’s Office of Statewide Prosecution, Consumer Protection Division, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and Office of Citizen Services. Seniors vs. Crime and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement actively assist the team with investigations and outreach efforts.

Since its inception, the Senior Protection Team has worked closely with law enforcement and administrative agencies across the state to ensure that crimes against seniors are identified, investigated and prosecuted when appropriate. The team's combined efforts have led to numerous arrests and the initiation of prosecutions across the state for crimes ranging from Medicaid fraud to financial exploitation of the elderly.

The team also carefully monitors reported fraudulent activity targeting seniors to identify emerging trends in scams and uses the information to educate Florida's seniors how to best protect themselves from becoming victims of fraud. Some of the most commonly reported forms of senior financial fraud and exploitation identified by the team include:

- Imposter scams: These scams involve someone posing as a relative, government agent, such as the IRS, FBI or other legitimate entity or a person with potential romantic interest in the senior seeking to obtain access to money or other assets or sensitive personal information;
- Home solicitation and contractor fraud: Scams in this area can run the gamut and involve conduct such as falsely soliciting products and services consumers do not need, obtaining unauthorized financing or performing work left unfinished or unacceptable; and
- Robocalls and telemarketing scams: By far the most prolific scams are perpetrated by telemarketers and robocallers seeking to obtain sensitive personal information either to steal identities or gain access to consumers' bank accounts or other assets.

While each of these scams pose a threat to individuals of all ages, seniors are specifically targeted by criminals because they are more likely to have assets, home equity and favorable credit. These fraudsters can be very convincing and compelling, which is why so many Americans, of all ages, have fallen victim to these schemes. Many seniors victimized by fraudsters never report offenses committed against them out of feelings of fear, shame or embarrassment. The Attorney General's Office encourages seniors to learn more about these scams to better protect themselves. Any suspicious activity should be reported to local law enforcement or by filing a complaint with the Attorney General's Office.

To assist seniors in identifying potential fraudulent schemes, the Attorney General has prepared a detailed guide entitled Savvy Seniors Can Stop Fraud containing information about emerging scams affecting seniors and tips to help identify and avoid being scammed.

As we face the current global health crisis, especially posing a serious risk to our seniors, the Attorney General's Office warns that scammers are using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to exploit the fears surrounding the virus and deceive seniors into providing access to bank accounts, credit card information and other assets. Seniors must stay vigilant. Throughout the pandemic, Attorney General Moody has issued multiple Consumer Alerts warning Florida seniors about COVID-19 scams targeted to take advantage of older consumers.

To view warnings and alerts regarding other COVID-19 related scams, click here.

For more information on Attorney General Moody's Senior Protection Team, click here.

To view Attorney General Moody's senior guide Savvy Seniors Can Stop Fraud, click here.