Dec 2, 2019

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Tips to Avoid Charity Fraud Ahead of Giving Tuesday



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday, and Attorney General Ashley Moody is encouraging Floridians to give to legitimate charities and organizations. Last year, online donations on Giving Tuesday topped $380 million. With many Floridians making charitable donations through the end of the year, it is important to know how to avoid giving to fake or illegitimate charitable entities.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “The holiday season is a very popular time of the year to give to charities and worthwhile causes. Giving Tuesday reminds us to take a pause amidst the holiday shopping and think of those who are less fortunate. I want to encourage Floridians to give generously, but also to give wisely—by researching the charity’s name online first and checking out the charity’s ratings with organizations like the Better Business Bureau.”

Illegitimate charities hurt communities by taking donor money under false pretenses and diverting it away from legitimate organizations. Attorney General Moody encourages Floridians to donate to established, trusted charities with a record of helping those in need.

Attorney General Moody recently released the 2019 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide. The guide includes tips to help ensure donations go to the stated charitable purpose, such as:

- Request additional information about the charity’s website, physical location, phone number, types of programs the donations support, and the percentage of donated funds actually going to serve those the charity says it helps. If a charity is unwilling to answer any

of these questions, be cautious;
- Do not be swayed by the name of the charity alone. Often, charity names are selected to have an emotional impact on specific groups of donors. Sometimes scammers will use a variation of an established charity's name or logo to give the appearance that the organizations are the same or related;
- Avoid paying with cash, gift cards or wire transfers. These methods are difficult to track, and it is often impossible to recover spent funds. Consider donating using a more secure and trackable method, such as a credit card; and
- Research before donating. Search for the charity's name online, using the words scam or complaint, and check resources for information about the charity, such as Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at (703) 247-9321.

To download a free copy of the 2019 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide, click here.

To report charitable solicitation scams or fraud to the Florida Attorney General's Office, call 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com.

For more tips to avoid being a victim of a charity scam, as well as additional resources for consumers, visit FTC.gov/Charity.