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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Avoid Charity Scams Related to Hurricane Ian



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert warning donors about charity scams that may appear as Hurricane Ian recovery efforts continue. The devastation caused by Ian is heartbreaking, and generous Floridians are looking for ways to help those displaced by the storm. Unfortunately, scammers may prey on donors by creating fake charities to steal money intended for those desperately in need.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “The outpouring of help and support for those displaced by Ian is heartwarming—and we hope people continue to give. However, scammers often take advantage of disasters in an effort to steal charitable donations. Please do your research before giving and consider donating to well-established charities such as FloridaDisasterFund.org. Being proactive with your donation is one of the best steps you can take to guard against charity fraud.”

Attorney General Moody is providing the following tips for Floridians to avoid scammers trying to take advantage of the disaster caused by the hurricane to steal donations:

- Consider giving to a well-established charity before being solicited;
- Research a charity before donating. Search the organization’s name at CharityNavigator.org for further vetting;
- Use a credit card for the extra protections provided;
- Avoid aggressive solicitors and urgent deadlines to give;
- Do not click on any suspicious links in emails or text messages soliciting money or financial information, even if it seems like it is for a good cause;

- Pay close attention to email addresses and website URLs—fraudulent sites will have slight changes from the legitimate sites; and
- Contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 1(800) HELP-FLA to check the legitimacy of a charity, or see if there are any complaints against the charity.

When looking to give through crowdsourcing platforms, below are a few steps Floridians can take to protect their donations:

- Research the solicitor's and donee's background before giving;
- Know that there are many different crowdsourcing platforms, each with different terms of use and fraud investigation practices;
- Check to see if the platform offers protections to donors should a campaign be found fraudulent;
- Determine what percentage of funds raised will go to the charity and what percentage goes to the platform; and
- Search to see if there are any identical or extremely similar campaigns. It is possible that scammers copy a legitimate campaign to fraudulently attract donors.

For additional information and tips for donating safely, check out Attorney General Moody's *Scams at a Glance: Charity Scams* resource. To view, click here.

Floridians can report charity scams to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.