



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Andrew Lanza Issues Consumer Alert Following Recent Reports of State Tax Debt Collection Scams

ANDREW J LANZA November 14, 2014

### *Scammers Impersonating Debt Collectors, Pocketing Debt Payments*

Senator Andrew Lanza today issued a consumer alert following recent reports of bogus tax debt collection scams. The New York State Taxpayer Rights Advocate has reported recent fraudulent activity by scammers posing as debt collectors seeking to settle alleged outstanding state tax debts. The scammers are pressuring consumers into sending payments via money order to satisfy debts that the consumers may not actually owe.

“Middle class families across New York State work hard to support their families and we don’t want them to get ripped off by scammers,” said Senator Andrew Lanza. “Consumers should be wary of any telephone solicitation asking them to send money and should always request appropriate documentation in writing.”

Attorney General Schneiderman has received a variety of complaints about tax-related consumer scams. This latest scheme involves scammers telling consumers they owe a tax debt to the state, which may not actually exist, and then promising to settle the alleged debt for a fraction of the cost that they claim is owed. Some of the calls have been reported as coming from the number 305-507-8505.

Scammers are reportedly using high-pressure tactics to intimidate consumers into purchasing money orders to satisfy debts and then instructing them to call back for instructions on how to submit the payment. Both federal and state tax authorities send notifications in writing. Consumers should be wary of demands for tax payment via phone, especially if the caller suggests the use of a money order to remit payment.

Attorney General Schneiderman is urging New Yorkers to be vigilant consumers and to report instances of fraud to his office. Consumers who believe they have been victims of any tax scams are urged to file [complaints](#) by visiting the Office’s website [www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov) or calling 1-800-771-7755.

**In an effort to help New Yorkers avoid various tax-themed scams, Senator Andrew Lanza's Office offered the following tips:**

- The IRS and legitimate government agencies never demand payment by phone;
- If you owe money, you will receive a legitimate notice in writing that identifies the agency and the reason you owe money;
- Do not give out personal information, including your Social Security number or bank account information, to telephone callers;
- Legitimate government organizations will never threaten arrest or deportation for failure to pay a debt.

Some additional websites with helpful information include:

[Internal Revenue Service](#)

[New York State Taxpayer Rights Advocate](#)

[NYS Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Tax Preparers](#)

[NYC Department of Consumer Affairs](#)

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