



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Warns Area Residents To Be Vigilant Against Ongoing IRS Phone Scam

CATHARINE YOUNG January 6, 2015

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*Area residents have already contacted the Senator's office after receiving a scam call*

ALBANY - Senator Catharine Young (R,I,C- Olean) is warning area residents to be on the lookout in response to an ongoing phone scam that has already plagued several local residents.

The scam begins with a resident receiving a call from someone purporting to be an agent of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The caller informs the resident they owe money to the IRS and demands it be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest or suspension of a business or driver's license. The threatening phone call is usually followed up by an additional phone call claiming to be from a local police office, sheriff department, or DMV office. Often these calls will be spoofed so that the victim's caller ID supports the fake claims.

“In recent weeks my office has received several reports about a phone scam that has hit our area, putting people’s savings and identities at risk. Con artists like the ones that have been reported to my office are using sophisticated dialing technology to spoof numbers, including the IRS and local sheriff’s offices, in order to pressure victims into transferring funds to cover bogus ‘back taxes.’ Area residents, especially our seniors and those with limited income, are often the target of these scams, which can potentially cost victims hundreds or thousands of dollars,” Senator Young said.

An IRS News Bulletin from October 2014 stated that any legitimate contact from the IRS with taxpayers on a tax issue is likely to occur via mail. Additionally, the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers to request personal or financial information by any type of electronic communication, such as text message, email, or social media channels. The IRS also does not ask for PINs, passwords or similar confidential access information for credit card, bank or other financial accounts.

“Area residents should be extra vigilant in the coming months, especially as tax season approaches, as con artists are using this scam to target taxpayers in nearly every state. If you ever believe you are receiving an inappropriate request, I strongly urge you to contact the IRS regional office in Buffalo at 716-961-5100,” continued Senator Young.

According to the IRS, additional characteristics of this scam include: scammers using fake names and IRS badge numbers; scammers spoofing the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it’s the IRS calling; and bogus IRS emails.

If someone receives this call, and they have an outstanding tax bill, they should call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 so an IRS employee can assist them with a payment issue – if there really is such an issue. If someone does not owe back taxes, or has no reason to think that owe any taxes, they are encouraged to report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484.