



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Malliotakis, Golden Urge Residents to Be Vigilant Against Phone Scams

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Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R,C,I-Bay Ridge) and State Senator Marty Golden (R,C,I-Southwest Brooklyn) are urging constituents to remain vigilant against the evolving threat of telephone scams. The most recent incarnation involves the scammers calling to threaten arrest for failure to pay past taxes owed or utility fees, unless payment is made through a reloadable debit card easily purchased at local stores. The calls are disguised to appear on caller ID screens as numbers belonging to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or National Grid.

“It’s scary to think about the lengths to which these people will go to make a dollar. The majority of their victims are the elderly and the homebound, some of the most vulnerable people in society. As most of the calls are coming from outside the country, the most effective way to put an end to this fraud is to make it less lucrative by getting the word out that these calls are not authentic. Anyone who receives such a call should contact their local police precinct to check the veracity of what’s being asked of them,” said Assemblywoman Malliotakis.

Senator Marty Golden stated, "It seems like almost every day, you hear of people being caught victim of a financial scam involving utilities, computer services, utilities, vacations and more. We must remain alert so to keep ourselves from being a victim. We must also make sure our friends and family are aware that these attempts to swindle us exist and any attempts at being defrauded must be reported to the authorities."

To complete this scam, a perpetrator tells a potential victim they owe money to the agency or company and if payment is not made immediately, additional fines/penalties will be assessed. If the perpetrator claims to be from the IRS, they sometimes tell the victim they owe taxes and if they pay, no one will be arrested. If the perpetrator claims to be from National Grid, they sometimes tell the victim their payment is past due and threaten to turn services off immediately.

Just this past Sunday, a National Grid impersonator was knocking on doors in the area and was persistent in asking to read the meter, until finally fleeing. Calls to National Grid confirmed they do not read meters on Sunday.

Victims are then instructed that a payment can be made over the phone using a reloadable debit card. The victim goes to a local store and purchases a card for the pre-arranged amount, calls the perpetrator back, and provides the perpetrator with the card number and PIN number from the card. The perpetrator then uses the information to remove the money from the card, defrauding the victim.

"It is the largest, most pervasive impersonation scam in the history of the IRS," according to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.