



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Warns Residents About IRS Phone Scam

ELAINE PHILLIPS February 23, 2017

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Senator Elaine Phillips (R-Manhasset) is warning residents about an ongoing scam where criminals impersonate IRS officials to steal large sums of money from their victims. Media reports noted that just recently, criminals used the scam to steal over \$68,000 from an Elmont senior citizen, telling her she would be arrested and lose her home if she did not pay her “tax debt” immediately.

“Scammers are cunning and heartless; they’re only concern is getting as much money out of their victims as possible. Being aware and informed are two of the best ways for people to protect themselves. By remembering a few simple steps, residents can avoid falling victim to this scam,” said Senator Phillips.

According to the New York State Department of State’s Division of Consumer Protection, the scam often works as follows; the scammer calls the victim pretending to be an IRS agent, tells them they have an outstanding tax debt, and instructs them to promptly submit payment through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim is hesitant, the scammer often threatens immediate police arrest. Scammers also often use “spoofing” technology to make the phone number appear to be from the IRS.

Senator Phillips advised residents of the following tips from the Division of Consumer Protection and the Internal Revenue Service:

- The IRS typically initiates contact with a taxpayer concerning a tax issue via mail. They will never call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a debit card or wire transfer, nor will they threaten immediate arrest for not paying. They will not demand tax payments without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe;
- The IRS does not ask for personal or financial information through email or for credit or debit card numbers over the phone;
- Call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 if you think you owe taxes or need help with a payment issue;
- Hang up the phone immediately if someone claiming to be from the IRS unexpectedly calls and threatens police arrest, deportation or license revocation;
- Report anything suspicious to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484 and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Please visit the FTC website at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov and add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.