



GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah Department of Commerce

FRANCINE A. GIANI
Executive Director

DANIEL O'BANNON
Director, Division of Consumer Protection

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MEDIA ADVISORY

"Utah Consumer Alert: Beware of Phony Social Security Number Calls"

"Division of Consumer Protection reports threatening calls ringing Utah consumers"

(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Department of Commerce, announced today that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection has received new reports of Utah consumers receiving live scam phone calls claiming they are facing legal action over their Social Security number and demanding the consumer confirm their number over the phone. Previous scam reports included robo call recordings where Utahns heard a message claiming their Social Security numbers had been compromised in fraud and demanding that the individual confirm their personal Social Security and bank information to avoid account suspension. State regulators urge the public to ignore these ambush calls and not respond to any request to repeat your Social Security number over the phone.

"Con artists continue to phone us with robo calls and live threats to try to trap Utahns into revealing their social security numbers over the phone. Please stay vigilant and don't fall for these phony phone calls, just hang up!" advised Francine A. Giani.

Federal investigators report these Social Security calls are more than a nuisance for phone owners. The Federal Trade Commission reports that 35,000 consumers sent over \$10M to scammers in 2018 related to false Social Security information.

"Remember this Social Security scam is a numbers game for fraudsters. They will keep calling Utah numbers to see who will take the bait. If you are unsure who is on the line, end the call and contact the real government agency instead," cautioned Daniel O'Bannon, Division Director.

What Consumers Need to Know about the Social Security Administration (SSA)

- 1) The SSA will never (ever) call and ask for your Social Security number. It won't ask you to pay anything. And it won't call to threaten your benefits.
- 2) Your caller ID might show the SSA's real phone number (1-800-772-1213), but

that's not the real SSA calling. Computers make it easy to show any number on caller ID. You can't trust what you see onscreen.

3) Never give your Social Security number to anyone who contacts you. Don't confirm the last 4 digits. And don't give a bank account or credit card number – ever – to anybody who contacts you asking for it.

4) Anyone who tells you to wire money, pay with a gift card, or send cash is a scammer. Always. No matter whom they say they are.

5) If you're worried about a call from someone who claims to be from the Social Security Administration, get off the phone. Then call the real SSA at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). If you've spotted a scam, then tell the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint.

For more information on how to protect yourself from scams or to file a complaint, log on to the Utah Division of Consumer Protection website at: www.consumerprotection.utah.gov

For media enquiries contact:

Jennifer Bolton

Public Information Officer

Utah Department of Commerce

(801) 530-6646 office

(801) 652-8322 cell

jenniferbolton@utah.gov

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