



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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JOHN J. FLANAGAN February 3, 2012

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New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli today warned of a lottery scam involving mail containing fraudulent checks that appear to have been issued by New York State.

“An offer of easy money is usually too good to be true and that is the case here,” DiNapoli said. “If you receive one of these fraudulent checks, please report it my office immediately.”

DiNapoli’s office has referred the matter to federal law enforcement.

Here is how the scam works: the scammers send potential victims a letter telling them that they are a winner of a lottery or sweepstakes drawing. The person receiving the check is directed to pay an amount to the scammer in order to secure his or her “full winnings.” Before the depositing bank has learned that the check is fake, the victim has already transferred the funds. Any money wired to the scammers cannot be retrieved. The recent letters are from scam artists representing themselves as “Guaranty Trust Inc.” with a New York City mailing address, and “Golden Gateway Financial, Division of Unclaimed Funds,” with a Las Vegas and London address.

Included with the letters are counterfeit New York State checks bearing the forged signature of the Comptroller. More than a dozen checks from “Guaranty Trust Inc.” have been recovered by the Comptroller’s office with amounts of either \$3,980.05 or \$4,885.20. The checks are supposed to cover the taxes that would be owed on the potential victim’s alleged winnings. The victim is directed to call a claims agent before acting on the letter.

In the letter from “Golden Gateway Financial, Division of Unclaimed Funds” the recipient is informed he or she is a winner in the “American Lottery Sweepstakes Millions” drawing. The company claims they were contacted by the “Multi State Lottery Association” to find winners that have not yet claimed their prizes.

Anyone who has received such a letter should contact the Comptroller's toll-free fraud hotline at 1-888-672-4555; file a complaint online at investigations@osc.state.ny.us or mail a complaint to: Office of the State Comptroller Investigations Unit, 110 State Street, 14th floor, Albany, NY 12236.

New York State Office of the New York State Comptroller