



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Warns Consumers About New Text Message Identity Theft Scam

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. September 6, 2013

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) is alerting consumers about a new scam in which identity thieves steal consumers identities through text messages.

The thieves send victims text messages which appear to be from financial institutions, utility companies or cell phone service providers. The text messages prompt recipients to click on an imbedded link or call the listed number. When consumers reply, they are then prompted to share personal identifiable information such as a PIN or social security number.

This method of scamming via phone text messaging is known as “SMiShing.” The name originates from “phishing,” the act of attempting to acquire personal information by an untrustworthy entity in an electronic communication. SMS (Short Message Service) is the technology used for text messages on cell phones.

Senator Fuschillo shared the following tips provided by the New York State Division of Consumer Protection to help individuals protect themselves against this scam:

- If you receive an unsolicited text from your bank or service provider requesting confirmation of personal information, do not respond or share any information.

Legitimate messages from these companies will never ask for personal information.

- If you are receiving any messages of this nature, forward them to 7726 (SPAM) to have your service provider block their number from your phone. This feature is completely free to use.
- Even if you receive only one of these spam messages, the Division of Consumer Protection strongly recommends filing a complaint to your service provider and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/>.
- If you want to verify the legitimacy of a message, contact your bank or service provider to see if they sent out the alert.