



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Warns Consumers of Elaborate Telephone and Email Tax Scams

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. November 22, 2013

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) is alerting residents about phone and email scams from individuals claiming to be from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Scammers posing as IRS or State Tax Department officials are threatening New Yorkers with fines, arrest, and other penalties if they do not immediately pay a claim of owed taxes.

“Con artists are impersonating government officials to threaten and scare residents into giving up their hard-earned money,” said Senator Fuschillo. “The best way for residents to protect themselves is to be aware of these scams and be extremely careful about giving out their personal or financial information. I encourage anyone who has been targeted or victimized by these scams to contact the authorities.”

The scams are being conducted primarily over the phone, with a caller instructing recipients to immediately submit payment for back taxes supposedly owed to the IRS or State through wire transfers or a pre-loaded debit card. In some cases these calls have been accompanied by a fake IRS e-mail sent to support the claim. If victims appear hesitant or unwilling to comply, the caller turns hostile by threatening police arrest or the loss of one’s home. If the victim does not respond to these threats, the scammer may have others call the victim pretending to be from a government entity such as a local law enforcement agency.

Many of the scam calls have been reported as coming from the 530 area code. Alternatively, through telephonic ‘spoofing’ techniques, the actual phone numbers of the IRS, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, and local police departments may also register on the caller’s ID screen, appearing to legitimize the fraudulent activity. Scammers have also used fake names and IRS badge numbers, and may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security Number.

In order to help consumers avoid falling victim to this scam, the New York State Department of State’s Division of Consumer Protection provides the following tips and information:

- The State Tax Department and the IRS always make first contact by letter with a phone number you can contact to verify that it was sent by the agency.

- Neither agency will request personal or financial information via email.
- Hang up the phone immediately if someone claiming to be from the Tax Department or IRS unexpectedly calls and threatens police arrest, deportation or license revocation.

To report fraudulent activity to New York State authorities, contact the State Tax Department at (518) 457-0578 or the New York State Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection at (518) 474-8583. Complaints can also be filed online through the State Tax Department at <http://www.tax.ny.gov/reporttaxfraud.htm>. Consumers can report fraud to the IRS by calling (800) 829-0433.