



AG STRANGE WARNS OF JURY DUTY SCAM CIRCULATING ACROSS ALABAMA

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Luther Strange warns of a scam spreading throughout Alabama. Someone pretending to be law enforcement, or with the court, calls the victim -- often an elderly person -- and threatens the victim with arrest for missing jury duty, but then offers to handle the matter for money, over the telephone. Circuit clerks around the state have reported increasing incidents, with the scam artists growing more and more sophisticated in their efforts to trick people.

The scammer usually informs the victim that there is a warrant for the victim's arrest for failing to report for jury duty. He, or she, then advises that bond has been ordered, sometimes dropping a local judge's name for effect. The scammer then reassures the victim the whole matter can be settled without the victim being arrested if the victim will just agree to purchase a pre-paid credit card and pay the bond over the phone. Victims have sometimes been instructed to go to a specific retail store to obtain such a card.

These calls are placed from pre-paid cell phones with local telephone numbers. These scams have been reported in an increasing number of Alabama counties, including Autauga, Butler, Coffee, Colbert, Covington, Etowah, Houston, Morgan and Tuscaloosa counties. Recent news reports from Mobile indicate this scam has spread into southwest Alabama as well.

Attorney General Strange cautions, "Please know, you will not be threatened with arrest, nor be asked to pay any fine, or post any bond in this manner. If, for any reason, the courts have an issue with you, you would usually be notified in writing and be ordered to contact the clerk's office, either in person or by telephone. Impersonating a law enforcement officer and misrepresenting the judicial process to frighten and trick people out of money is a serious crime, and we hope anyone who receives such a call will report it to their local law enforcement and court officials."

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