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Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



For media inquiries only, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

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Attorney General Steve Marshall, State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter Issue Consumer Alert About Fraudulent Checks That Appear to Be from State of Alabama

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Steve Marshall and State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter issued a consumer alert today warning that scammers are sending out fraudulent checks that purport to be from the State of Alabama Department of Finance. Even though no funds have been withdrawn from the State of Alabama accounts due to the fraudulent checks, it is important that the State of Alabama warn consumers of the scam that is taking place.

The checks have been sent, usually by priority mail, throughout the United States. A letter instructs the recipient where to send a certain amount of the funds, and claims that the checks are sent for various fictitious reasons, including it is a sign-on bonus for a job that was applied for through the internet; that it is payment for agreeing to put advertising stickers, logos, or wraps on one’s vehicle, or that it is an inheritance from a recently-deceased family member.

Attorney General Marshall and Comptroller Baxter advise anyone who receives an unexpected check from the State of Alabama to seek verification by calling the State Comptroller’s Office at 334-242-7050.

“It is particularly offensive for someone to hide their dishonesty behind the good name of the State of Alabama,” said Attorney General Marshall. “The State of Alabama will never send a check with instructions to open an account or send some of the money back through irregular means. If there is ever doubt about a State check, consumers should contact the Comptroller’s Office, and for concerns about other unexpected checks, they may call the Consumer Interest Division in my office.”

Attorney General Marshall and Comptroller Baxter offer the following cautionary tips:

- Be on guard for anything that seems suspicious. The check, as well as the story, could be fake. Do not cash a check from someone you do not know.
- Fraudulent checks may look legitimate. It is important to verify with your bank that the check has cleared before spending the money. Under federal law, banks allow funds you deposit to be made available quickly. Just because you can withdraw the money does not mean the check is good. A fake check scam could cost you thousands of dollars.
- Do not wire money to someone you do not know. Wiring money is like sending cash and cannot be recovered.
- Report suspicious checks or money orders to your bank as soon as possible.
- You may seek advice from the Attorney General’s Consumer Interest Division by calling toll-free 1-800-392-5658.

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