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STATE OF HAWAII

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Wednesday, May 03, 2017

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Office of the Public Defender Warns Residents of Telephone Scam Using Legal Aid or Public Defender Name

The Office of the Public Defender, State of Hawaii is warning the public about recent telephone solicitations asking for money from people claiming to be part of the Legal Aid Society, Office of the Public Defender, or state courthouse.

The Office of the Public Defender is a state agency administratively attached to the State of Hawaii Department of Budget and Finance. The office receives its funding directly from the State Legislature, and does not solicit funds or donations from the Public.

In some instances, people are told that a case is pending involving a friend or family member and that a monetary payment is required to pursue the case. At other times, the caller may claim to be collecting donations on behalf of the national Legal Aid or Public Defender office and may leave a toll free 1-800 number. The caller may even claim to be representing a courthouse. In all instances, the caller will try to collect credit card information over the phone.

Hawaii's Department of the Attorney General asks anyone who gave money through this phone scam to contact their office at (808) 586-1500. Hawaii's Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs published [Hawaii's Fraud Prevention & Resource Guide](#) reminding the public:

Do not respond to a text or call from an unknown number that is requesting personal account numbers, social security numbers or any other personal information.

- Do not provide any personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call and are certain of who you contacted.
- If the caller makes you feel uncomfortable, hang up the phone.
- To reduce telemarketing calls on your home and cell phone, go to donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 or 1-866-290-4236 (TTY).