



For Immediate Release

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*******CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*****
MADIGAN WARNS CONSUMERS ABOUT NEW PHISHING E-MAIL
IDENTITY THEFT SCAM**

Chicago – With a new scam targeting consumers who receive social security benefits popping up in e-mail inboxes, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned consumers not to give out their Social Security information or bank account numbers in response to an unsolicited email.

Madigan’s Consumer Protection Division has received reports from other states that a new e-mail scam is circulating, falsely informing the recipient “that social security records need to be confirmed.” The e-mail directs the recipient to a phony Web site designed to look like the official Social Security Web site.

Once directed to the phony site, the e-mail recipient is asked to confirm his or her identity by providing personal and financial information, including social security number and bank account numbers. The phony website also may request specific information about the individual’s credit card number, expiration date and PIN number. In addition, the scammers may be installing “spyware” in the computers of those who click on the link in the message.

“Unsolicited e-mails and copycat Web sites are common tools used by con artists to trick consumers into divulging personal information,” Madigan said. “Internet users should be wary of online solicitations and should never divulge personal information requested in an unsolicited e-mail.”

The Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General has confirmed that this e-mail was not sent by that Agency and said the Social Security Administration never asks consumers to disclose their credit card information, social security numbers or PIN numbers via the Internet or over the phone.

Incidents regarding e-mail should be reported to the Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General by calling 1-800-269-0271 or 1-866-501-2101 (TTY). Consumers also may call Madigan’s Identity Theft Hotline at 1-866-999-5630. The TTY number is 1-877-844-5491. Madigan’s hotline is the first of its kind in the nation, offering a dedicated toll-free number staffed by advocates specially trained to help victims repair their credit, dispute fraudulent debts and prevent future victimization.

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