



November 8, 2010

*******CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*********ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN WARNS OF PHONY PRIZE SWEEPSTAKES FALSELY CLAIMING TIES TO THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW, READER'S DIGEST*****Scammers Claim Callers Won New Cars, Require Them to Pay First***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today is warning consumers of a rash of unsolicited phone calls to Illinois consumers claiming they have won new cars in a sweepstakes sponsored by "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and Reader's Digest.

According to Harpo Productions Inc., producers of "The Oprah Winfrey Show," consumers over the past week have received the calls telling them they have won cars through a sweepstakes. The scammer then asks consumers to wire money or write a check to a third party. In some cases, consumers were asked to pay as much as \$500 before receiving their new car.

"Anytime you are asked to pay money to receive a prize, especially from a contest you did not even enter, you should assume it is a scam and stay away from it," Attorney General Madigan said. "Unfortunately, these scammers are using a well-known and trusted celebrity and magazine in an attempt to steal people's money."

Madigan urged consumers who have contacted about this scam to call her office's Consumer Fraud Hotline:

Chicago 1-800-386-5438
Springfield 1-800-243-0618
Carbondale 1-800-243-0607

Consumers, including out-of-state residents, can also visit www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov for information about filing a complaint. Madigan also urged out-of-state consumers to report the incident to their local authorities, their state attorney general's office and to monitor their financial accounts for any suspicious activity.

-30-

[Return to November 2010 Press Releases](#)