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**\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*****MADIGAN: HANG UP ON PHONY GOVERNMENT SCAMS*****Attorney General Warns Phone Scammers Posing as Government Officials Attempt to Con Illinois Residents Into Sending Money***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today alerted Illinois residents to a rising phone scam in which callers pose as government officials to attempt to con people into sending money on supposed unpaid taxes or to collect winnings in a fake sweepstakes.

Madigan's office has seen an increase in the number of calls to her office in recent weeks from Illinois residents who have been contacted by scammers pretending to be government officials with bogus claims that the call recipients are under investigation or that they owe money to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also issued a nationwide alert this week about similar phone scams that "spoof" caller ID devices into displaying what appear to be legitimate calls from government agencies, with identifiers such as "FTC" and "IRS" or from the (202) area code for Washington, D.C. Scam artists on the other end of the line claim they are representatives of the federal government collecting on a phony debt or unpaid taxes and instruct their targets to put money on a prepaid debt cards and then to dictate the number to the scammers over the phone. In a similar scheme, the scammers inform their targets that they supposedly won a prize or sweepstakes sponsored by the FTC or another government agency, but to collect, the "winners" must send in a payment to cover shipping, taxes or other upfront expenses.

"Any time you are asked upfront for money in an unsolicited call, that is a universal red flag for a scam. A government office will not seek money or personal information from you over the phone," Madigan said. "If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately."

Madigan suggested recipients of these solicitations should contact the government agency in question to report the call. She also urged Illinois residents to report the scam to her Consumer Fraud Bureau at 1-800-386-5438 or by visiting her [website](#).

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