

## FRAUD ALERT

September 2016

### CAMPAIGN DONATIONS and POLL FRAUDSTERS

Are you thinking about making a donation to a campaign party or candidate?

**This year, nothing is a bigger story in the United States than the 2016 presidential election. Watch out for cons that prey on would-be political donors.**

**Here is how the scam works....**

- You get a call from someone claiming to represent a political candidate, raising money to support the campaign or taking a poll. They may be collecting funds for a specific cause, such a healthcare reform, a border fence, or on behalf of a group of people, such as veterans.
- The caller asks if you will donate and specifies an amount of money. It may seem to be genuine since political groups are excluded from the provisions of the Do Not Call Registry and the caller may know your party affiliation if you have one. You've been planning to give to the campaign, so you provide your name, address, and credit card number.

#### **STOP! DON'T DO IT!!**

Some of these calls are outright scams, and **providing your credit card number and personal information opens you up to the risk of fraudulent charges and identity theft.** Even if the caller is not a scammer, some groups may be poorly managed and not actually spend the money the way they describe on the phone.

#### **Tips to avoid campaign donation cons:**

- Donate directly to the campaign office: Donations made over the phone can be valid, but any wary donor should give to campaigns either through the candidates' official website or at a local campaign office
- Watched for spoofed calls: Your Caller ID may say that someone from Washington DC is contacting you, but scammers can fake this using phone number spoofing technology.

#### **Political Poll Scams:**

- Scam artists usually choose a hot topic that's currently making the headlines to make it seem like a legitimate survey. And just to ensure your cooperation, they offer a reward like free cruise tickets if you answer all their questions.
- If you hesitate or say you want to check their credentials, they try bullying tactics telling you the free tickets are only available if you answer their questions right now. Those survey questions usually turn out to be quick and quite shallow because it's the cruise offer that's the scam.
- After completing the survey, victims are told their tickets will be sent to them but, first, the caller needs credit card details to cover port charges and taxes.

#### **The Facts:**

- Legitimate pollsters don't offer prizes like this and they would never ask for confidential information like bank account and credit card details.

Beware too of the possibility that scammers might even still try this trick after the elections are over — pretending to seek your opinion on the result.

Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:

**[Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force](#)**

**Bucks County District Attorney's Office**  
215-348-6344  
**Bucks County Area Agency on Aging**  
215-348-0510  
**Bucks County Coroner's Office**  
215-348-3852  
**Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)**  
1-800-675-6900

**[www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org](http://www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org)**

**A Woman's Place (AWP)**  
1-800-220-8116  
**Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection**  
215-348-6060  
**Bucks County Register of Wills**  
215-348-6265  
**US Dept. of Health and Human Services/OIG**  
1-800-447-8477

**24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505**