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NEWS RELEASE



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Consumer Protection Alert

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BEWARE OF "JURY DUTY" SCAM

(Anchorage) – Attorney General David W. Márquez issued a warning today for Alaskans to be on the lookout for a new scam involving phone calls from someone representing themselves to be an official from the court or jury clerk's office.

The Attorney General has received reports of scam artists calling consumers and identifying themselves as an officer or employee of the local court or jury clerk's office. The scammer tells the victim a bench warrant was issued for their arrest for failure to report for jury duty. The shock caused by this news makes consumers more susceptible to the scam. The victim will rightly deny knowledge of any such claim; that no jury duty notification was ever received.

The scammer will then reassure the victim of the possibility this is all "just a misunderstanding" or "some sort of clerical error" that can all be easily corrected if the victim will simply "verify" their information with a few simple questions. If a victim is reluctant to verify any information the scammer threatens the victim that failure to cooperate will result in the immediate issuance of an arrest warrant. The scammer attempts to obtain as much personal information from the victim as possible, including social security number, date of birth, and will solicit credit card or bank account numbers claiming these will be used by their credit bureau to "verify" the victim's identity. Family members who receive these calls are especially vulnerable to coercion. Threats against the victim's military career, should he/she be arrested and have a criminal record, are frightening and persuasive.

"I want to advise all Alaska residents and Active Duty military personnel that they should never give out personal information to anyone on the phone that you do not know and trust," said Márquez. "Legitimate court employees and other state officials will never call to solicit this type of personal or financial information from you. Any person receiving such calls should record the scammer's phone number (if caller ID is available) and immediately report the contact to local police authorities."

If you have additional questions or if you want to report on any suspicious solicitations, please contact the Department of Law, Consumer Protection Unit at: (907) 269-5200, or toll free at: 1-888-576-2529.

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