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## **AG MARSHALL OFFERS TIPS TO AVOID TECH SUPPORT SCAMS**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall today shared advice to consumers on how to avoid falling prey to tech support scams. As the Attorney General’s Consumer Interest Division is receiving an increasing number of reports of these fraudulent attempts, he warns consumers to be vigilant.

Working together, the State of Alabama and the FTC were recently successful in obtaining a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction to suspend fraudulent tech support practices by a company operating out of offices in Birmingham and Huntsville. These steps were part of a major international crackdown by the FTC and states on tech support scams, to combat this recurring problem throughout the nation.

“Arming consumers with knowledge is the best way to stop this crime, which uses high pressure fear tactics to induce panic in victims,” said Attorney General Marshall. “We are working hard to stop these scam operations and protect Alabamians from falling prey to this national problem.” “I am grateful and proud of the work of my consumer interest staff in successfully stopping the tech scam in our state earlier this month.”

Attorney General Marshall urges consumers to be aware of the following recommendations that are offered by the Federal Trade Commission:

- “If you get an unexpected or urgent call from someone who claims to be tech support, hang up. It’s not a real call. And don’t rely on caller ID to prove who a caller is. Criminals can make caller ID seem like they’re calling from a legitimate company or a local number.
- If you get a pop-up message that tells you to call tech support, ignore it. There are legitimate pop-ups from your security software to do things like update your operating system. But do not call a number that pops up on your screen in a warning about a computer problem.

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- If you're concerned about your computer, call your security software company directly – but don't use the phone number in the pop-up or on caller ID. Instead, look for the company's contact information online, or on a software package or your receipt.
- Never share passwords or give control of your computer to anyone who contacts you.
- Get rid of malware. Update or download legitimate security software and scan your computer. Delete anything the software says is a problem.
- Change any passwords that you shared with someone. Change the passwords on every account that uses passwords you shared."

For more details regarding how to avoid tech support scams, visit the Federal Trade Commission webpage at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0346-tech-support-scams>.

To verify if their computers may be in legitimate need of service or repair, or to report a tech support scam, consumers may consider contacting:

- The Federal Trade Commission - 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)
- Their computer or operating system's manufacturer support service
  - Microsoft - (800) 642-7676
  - Apple - (800) 275-2273
- The company with which they may have virus protection or other computer security service.

Consumers who have concerns or have been victims by this kind of scam may contact AG Marshall's consumer office for more information by calling toll-free 1-800-392-5658, and may file a complaint through the Attorney General's webpage at <http://www.ago.alabama.gov/Page-Consumer-Protection-File-a-Complaint-01>.