

NEWS RELEASE
Luther Strange
Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 8, 2017

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AG STRANGE WARNS ABOUT GRANDPARENT ITUNES SCAM

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Luther Strange said his office has received recent calls about a recurring fraud in which the scammer pretends to be a grandchild or other relative in trouble and in need of money.

Generally, the target is an elderly person and the caller claims a crisis such as being in jail, being stranded away from home, being hospitalized or having an urgent debt that must be paid. The caller asks the person to keep the matter confidential and to wire money or buy a prepaid credit or debit card. The current twist is asking the person to use an iTunes card for payment. Other variations involve requests for Amazon gift cards, PayPal, or other prepaid cards.

“These thieves are preying upon elderly people who may not be familiar with what iTunes cards are, and would not realize it is not a legitimate request,” said Attorney General Strange. “They try to create panic about a loved one’s emergency, and push for immediate action before the victim has a chance to give the matter thought and take precautions.”

The Federal Trade Commission advises people to resist the urge to act immediately and to verify the emergency if they receive such a call. It is recommended to ask questions that only the real relative could actually answer, and to check out the story even if you have been asked to keep it a secret. Furthermore, an iTunes card should not be required for payment unless one is shopping at an iTunes store, and not for a crisis situation.

Those who are targeted by such scams are urged to report the matter to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint, or to contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Interest Division by calling toll-free 1-800-392-5658 or through the Attorney General’s website at www.ago.alabama.gov.

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