NEWS RELEASE
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Attorney General Jackley Warns of Grandparent Scam

PIERRE, S.D - Attorney General Marty Jackley is warning South Dakota seniors to be cautious if they receive telephone calls from someone who claims to be their grandchild or other family member and requests money for a critical situation. The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division has seen an increased number of complaints from seniors who have been receiving telephone calls from a purported grandchild in need of money.

In this reoccurring scam, the caller poses as a grandchild and uses a plea for help and a sense of urgency when asking for a wire transfer. If the scam works as it should, the victim will wire money and by the time the senior realizes what happened, the money is long gone and most likely not recoverable. In addition, these scam artists are getting wise and avoiding national chain stores for wire transfers. These chains are asking the right questions to help avoid these scams from occurring. The scammers are directing seniors to payday loan operations that may not be familiar to these types of scams.

Here are some tips to remember to avoid becoming a victim:

• Ask several personal questions including something that only a grandchild would be able to answer like a nickname, name of a family pet or special family tradition. This will help determine if this is a fraud or not.

• Don't hesitate to call another family member or the grandchild directly with a number that is familiar to you.

• Do not fill in the blanks for the caller. If the caller says, "This is your granddaughter," ask "which one?" or "where are you calling from?" The caller is looking for answers that will assist them in the scam.

• Be cautious if the caller asks you to not tell anyone else, like the parents, because he or she will get in trouble. It is all part of the scam.

If you believe the call is fraudulent then contact your local law enforcement agency. Those who have already sent money should contact the Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or by email at consumerhelp@state.sd.us.

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