

Maryland Donors Warned of Charity Scams in the Wake of Natural Disasters

ANNAPOLIS, MD – As the public demand for donations increases for Hurricane Harvey survivors, many Marylanders may feel compelled to donate. For those that do choose to make a donation to support those in the impacted areas, the Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith and Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh advise consumers to be vigilant to donate wisely.

“During these times of unfortunate events, individuals will attempt to prey on your generosity and introduce all types of scams, frauds or deceptive acts to line their own pockets,” warns Secretary Wobensmith. “Be sure you know who you are giving to and it is best to give directly to well-established charitable organizations.”

The Office of the Secretary of State registers and regulates charitable organizations that solicit charitable contributions in Maryland. Together with the Attorney General’s Office, the Secretary of State’s Office works to ensure that charitable contributions go to qualified charitable organizations and are used for their intended purpose.

“Sometimes at the end of a storm, you get a rainbow; other times you get a scammer,” said Attorney General Frosh. “It is wise to research the charity first before donating, and consumers should avoid any charity or fundraiser that is reluctant to give information on how donations are used.”

For more tips on how to give wisely, please visit the Maryland Attorney General’s Office, Consumer Protection Division publication [Consumer’s Edge Charitable Giving Tips](#).

To find out whether a particular charity is authorized to solicit in Maryland, the Secretary of State’s Office maintains a public registry of charitable organizations authorized to solicit in Maryland. For more information and to search the registry, please visit the Secretary of State’s charity home page: <http://sos.maryland.gov/Charity/Pages/SearchCharity.aspx>.

If you feel like you may have been a victim of a deceptive or illegal charitable solicitation, you should contact the Charities and Legal Services Division of the Secretary of State’s Office at [410-974-5521](tel:410-974-5521) or [1-800-825-4510](tel:1-800-825-4510).

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Donors Warned of Charity Scams in the Wake of Irma

ANNAPOLIS, MD - Appeals for charitable donations will surge as the East Coast reels from the effects of Category 4 Hurricane Irma. To add insult to injury, Hurricanes Jose and Katia are on the heels of Irma. Generous Marylanders will donate to provide relief for those impacted by these horrific disasters. "Donors need to be vigilant and donate wisely, scam artists are out there and prey on the generosity of well-intended donors," advises John C. Wobensmith, Maryland Secretary of State.

"The devastating effects of Hurricane Irma upended the lives of tens of thousands, maybe more, who are caught in the cross hairs of this disaster. Scam artists may prey on your generosity by trying to con you into giving to fraudulent charities and scams to line their own pockets," warns Secretary Wobensmith. "Those who suffered the ravages of Irma and similar disasters need and are grateful for your generosity. Make sure that if you choose to give, that your donations are given to reputable, well-established charities."

The Office of the Secretary of State registers and regulates charitable organizations that solicit contributions in Maryland. Together with the assistance of the Maryland Attorney General, the Secretary of State enforces Maryland's charitable giving laws to ensure that donations are used for their intended purpose.

Visit <http://sos.maryland.gov/Charity/Pages/Giving-Wisely.aspx> on the Secretary of State's website for tips on how to give wisely to charities.

The Office of the Secretary of State keeps a public registry of charitable organizations authorized to solicit in Maryland. Please check the Secretary of State website <http://sos.maryland.gov/Charity/Pages/SearchCharity.aspx> for information and to search the registry to determine if a specific charity is authorized to solicit in Maryland.

You may report a complaint if you think you have been a victim of a deceptive or illegal charitable solicitation. Report a complaint to the Charities and Legal Services Division at [410-974-5521](tel:410-974-5521) or [1-800-825-4510](tel:1-800-825-4510).

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