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## Secretary Wobensmith Highlights October 19-23 As International Charity Fraud Awareness Week

### *Charities, Nongovernmental Organizations, and Nonprofits Especially Vulnerable During COVID-19 Pandemic*

**ANNAPOLIS, MD**—Maryland Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith today highlighted International Charity Fraud Awareness Week, which brings stakeholders in the charity and nonprofit sectors together to raise awareness and share best practices in tackling fraud and cybercrime. International Charity Fraud Awareness Week began on October 19 and continues through October 23.

“As we continue to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to highlight International Charity Fraud Awareness Week and urge Marylanders to be vigilant,” said Secretary Wobensmith. “Protecting reputable charities and the public from fraudulent activity is vitally important, as is spreading the word to those who are most vulnerable to fraud and cybercrime.”

This year’s campaign has three core messages: be fraud aware, take time to check, and keep your charity safe. More information will be distributed on the Secretary of State’s [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) throughout the week.

Charities, nongovernmental organizations, and nonprofits are all potential targets that are susceptible to fraud. Those providing services and supporting local communities may be especially vulnerable to fraudsters attempting to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic to carry out fraud and cybercrime. In [March](#), Secretary Wobensmith and Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh cautioned Marylanders to be vigilant and to donate wisely. Now more than ever, charities must be fraud aware and take steps to protect their money, donors, and assets from harm.

International Charity Fraud Awareness Week is led by an international coalition of over 40 charities, regulators, section and professional representative bodies, and other interested stakeholders, including: The Australian Charities and Non-for-profits Commission, BBB Wise Giving Alliance, Chartered Accountants Worldwide, Charity Commission for England and Wales, Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, Fraud Advisory Panel, ICAEW, NZ Charities Services, Office of the New York State, Attorney General, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, UK Finance and Take Five to Stop Fraud, UK National Cyber Security Centre, US Federal Trade Commission, IRS, US National Association of State Charity Officers, as well as charities such as British Council and Oxfam.

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