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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alert Issued to Consumers to Beware of Scam Election Calls

BALTIMORE, MD (March 5, 2024) – The Maryland Attorney General’s Office is offering information to help people detect and avoid scam election calls. This alert was issued to all consumers who have subscribed to receive consumer information from our office. Consumers can subscribe to this list here: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MDAG/subscriber/new>.

Election call scams are a serious threat to the fairness and trustworthiness of elections, even posing a substantial threat to democracy itself. These scams usually involve robocalls that impersonate real political campaigns or candidates. The goal of these calls is to deceive you, manipulate your choices, and potentially disrupt the entire voting process. *Any call that directs you NOT to exercise your right to vote is a scam.*

Robocalls are often from scammers who want to steal your money or your identity, but election call scams are often trying to persuade you to perform, or not perform, a certain action. One of the most appalling scams occurs when fraudsters try to convince you to not exercise your right to vote. If you answer a phone call and hear a celebrity’s or politician’s recorded voice, keep in mind that this voice could have been faked by artificial intelligence (AI) and may not be who you think it is.

Companies that use AI to impersonate government officials may be violating the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), the Truth in Caller ID Act, and other state consumer protection laws, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

The Maryland Office of the Attorney General fights to stop illegal robocalls and enforces consumer protection laws against robocalling scammers. In 2012, our office won a judgment of over \$1 million against a company that violated the TCPA by placing robocalls to 112,000 Democrat voters. These calls suggested to voters that they did not have to vote in that election because Democrat candidates had already won. In this case, the Court found that “the purpose of the message was to suppress the votes of the largely African American and Democratic populations in Baltimore City and Prince George’s County.”

Recently, The Anti-Robocall Multistate Litigation Task Force (Task Force), which includes the Maryland Attorney General’s Office, issued a warning letter to a company that allegedly sent New Hampshire residents scam election robocalls that mimicked President Joe Biden’s voice to discourage voters from voting in New Hampshire’s January primary election.

The Task Force of 51 bipartisan Attorneys General investigates and takes legal action against those responsible for routing illegal robocalls into and across the United States. Our office and the other members of the Task Force sued another company suspected of making millions of illegal robocalls to Marylanders. To read our press release on that lawsuit, click here: <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/052323a.pdf>.

If you think you or somebody you know has received a scam election call, contact our office's Consumer Protection Division at 410-528-8662 with as much information as you are able to provide, including the date and time of the call, the number and name on the caller ID, and the subject of the call.

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<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2024/030524CA.pdf>