



Department of Consumer Protection
Jonathan A. Harris, Commissioner



Attorney General
George Jepsen



Secretary of the State
Denise W. Merrill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Warns Businesses about "Official" Reporting Scam

HARTFORD, August 6 – Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner Jonathan A. Harris, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill and Attorney General George Jepsen are warning businesses across Connecticut about bogus forms being sent by the "Division of Corporate Services" seeking payment for an "Annual Records Statement," alleging that payment is required by Connecticut law. A copy of the fraudulent form is attached.

"This scam attempts to collect money from companies that need to comply with a State reporting requirement," Harris said. "There is absolutely no value in responding to this fake mailing and we urge companies to ignore it; do not send payment."

"Businesses registered with the state of Connecticut are required by law to file only Annual Reports with our office, which are very minimal in nature," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief business registrar. "There is no legal requirement for any business to file the minutes or bylaws that this company is offering to file, in exchange for payment. Those are internal business documents and I urge any Connecticut company that has received this solicitation to ignore it and not pay for services they do not need."

"My office has received about a dozen complaints from businesses in Connecticut that have received this fraudulent mailing," said Attorney General Jepsen. "While our agencies are investigating this, I urge businesses and consumers to stay vigilant and to make very sure that any unsolicited requests for payments – whether they are suspicious-looking invoices or forms such as this that appear to reference legal requirements – are truly official before sending payment."

This deceptive solicitation has an "official" appearance and references a Connecticut state law. Scams like this direct the recipient to send a fee, usually much higher than the true fee, for services that are not needed.

Some "official" scam solicitations do not include headings that appear to come from the state, but rather include details and warnings about penalties and fines that could lead the recipient to believe they are authentic. Mailings also come in official looking envelopes with warnings about fines and penalties.

Businesses and other organizations should always scrutinize mailings to be sure they are legitimate before issuing payment. To avoid being defrauded by bogus mailings, Commissioner Harris and Secretary of the State Merrill offer the following advice:

- Review the fine print. Many, like the one in this example, will state that it "does not officially represent the State of Connecticut or other government entity," or something similar. However, not all fake solicitations include this disclosure, so it's always best to confirm with the appropriate official source, especially before sending any payment.

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- Before initiating payment, verify with the person in your company responsible for official reporting.
- Be wary of mailings from companies with the word "compliance" in their name.
- Simply because an email address contains the .us designation does not mean it is from the U.S. or any state government.

Secretary Merrill said, "If you are ever unsure about the legitimacy of a business filing notice you receive, please check with my office at 860-509-6003 or go online at www.concord-sots.ct.gov if you need information on corporate filings. We are ready and eager to help any Connecticut business owner."

"I encourage anyone who receives an "invoice" or other request for payment for unordered, undelivered or unsolicited services to notify the Department of Consumer Protection at dcp.frauds@ct.gov or call 1-800-842-2649," Harris said. "By doing so, you may help us to prevent others from being scammed."

If your business has received the bogus "Annual Records Statement" form, please discard. Do not send money.

An investigation into the mailing is underway.

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