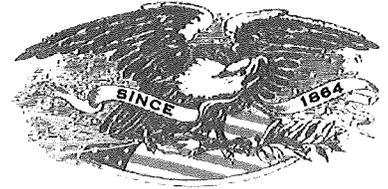




GEORGE JEPSEN
ATTORNEY GENERAL



WILLIAM M. RUBENSTEIN
COMMISSIONER



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COMMISSIONER

August 8, 2011

Re: Solicitation of Charitable Funds on Your Premises

Dear Retail Merchant:

A common sight outside many stores lately is one or more representatives collecting for various charitable organizations. We applaud businesses that allow their premises to be used for charitable fundraising purposes. This and other kinds of charitable activities are cornerstones of strong communities. We write today to advise you of a few simple steps you can take to prevent fraudsters and scam artists posing as legitimate charities from taking advantage of you and your customers.

Although many fundraising organizations are properly registered charities with authorization to solicit funds in the State of Connecticut, many, unfortunately, are not. The registration of charities that fundraise helps to promote the public's confidence in making charitable contributions in the first place. However, unregistered charities, particularly those that solicit small cash donations, fly beneath the State's radar and can more easily misuse the charitable funds they collect. There have been a number of complaints in recent years of charities collecting donations at supermarkets and other places and misrepresenting that the collected funds would benefit local veterans' organizations. These scams not only hurt the donating public, but also hinder the efforts of legitimate charities, including those doing invaluable work for our country's military veterans.

We thought it would be helpful to provide you with a quick overview of the registration requirements for the solicitation of charitable funds in Connecticut and the means to confirm the proper registration of those organizations that seek permission to solicit on your premises. Just a little effort will ensure that your customers are being solicited by organizations that have properly registered with the State.

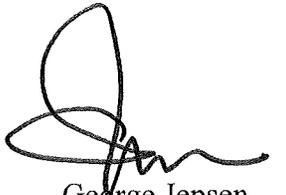
The Connecticut Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act (the "Act") requires that organizations must register with the Department of Consumer Protection ("DCP") prior to soliciting charitable contributions in Connecticut. The Act applies to organizations that solicit funds or anything of value "for any benevolent, educational, philanthropic, humane, scientific, patriotic, social welfare or advocacy, public health, environmental conservation, civic or eleemosynary purpose, or for the benefit of law enforcement officers, firefighters or other persons who protect the public safety." Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-190a(1). So, for example, most organizations that solicit for youth drug programs or veterans would be covered.

DCP's Public Charities office is responsible for the regulation of charitable organizations in Connecticut and provides information to the public about charitable organizations. To find out if an organization is registered to solicit charitable funds in Connecticut, you can go to www.ct.gov/dcp. From DCP's home page, click on "Verify a License" to arrive at the State of Connecticut eLicensing Website. Click on "Look up a license" and then in the "License Type" box, scroll down to and select Charities (CHR). Enter the business name or first part of the business name in the "Business Name/DBA" box and click "search". All registered active organizations are listed, including those that have claimed an exemption from having to register. You may also ask the organization for a copy of its DCP registration confirmation.

If you find that a charity is not listed on DCP's website, you may contact the Public Charities Unit at DCP at (860)713-6170 or send an email to: ctcharityhelp@ct.gov. Charities must be on file with DCP before they may solicit funds in Connecticut.

Our offices are routinely asked about the merits of individual charities, including the percentage of funds spent on charitable purposes – a potentially important measure of a charity's effectiveness. Unfortunately, we are not authorized by law to rate the effectiveness of charities or limit the amount of funds that may be spent on the administrative costs of fundraising activities. Private organizations, such as CharityNavigator, do compile information on charities' effectiveness and make it readily available on the internet. You may find these kinds of resources helpful in deciding which charities may use your premises for fundraising, but we cannot vouch for the accuracy of such information.

We hope this information has been helpful to you and that you will take a few moments to confirm that anyone soliciting charitable funds on your premises is properly registered. Thank you for your cooperation and for your work in support of charitable causes.



George Jepsen
Attorney General



William M. Rubenstein
Commissioner of Consumer Protection



Linda Spoonster Schwartz
Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs