



GEORGE JEPSEN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



WILLIAM M. RUBENSTEIN
COMMISSIONER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 7, 2014

State Advises Consumers About Readers Digest Prize Scam *Scammers Use Fake Governor Malloy Letter*

HARTFORD, February 7 - Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner William M. Rubenstein, Attorney General George Jepsen and Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Commissioner Dora B. Schriro today are advising residents to avoid responding to a letter claiming to be from Governor Dannel P. Malloy and bearing a replica of his signature, informing them that in return for a cash payment to cover state taxes, they will receive the Reader's Digest Sweepstakes prize of \$5 million and a Mercedes Benz vehicle.

"This letter is not from any office within the State of Connecticut, particularly that of the Governor," Commissioner William Rubenstein said. "Rather, it's a common example of a scam letter, replete with certain clues that easily give it away as such. We urge anyone receiving this communication to ignore it, and certainly do not send money as requested. Loud alarm bells should go off anytime you are told you won a contest that you did not enter, or that you are required to pay money before receiving a prize. Those are telltale signs of a scam."

"Scam artists use a variety of techniques – some simple and some more sophisticated – to attempt to obtain money or personal information," said Attorney General Jepsen. "This scam is particularly concerning because it uses the governor and the position of authority that comes with his office in an attempt to appear legitimate. All residents should use caution when it comes to unsolicited phone calls, faxes, letters or emails."

"Residents should be wary of any solicitation involving personal information or the transfer of any monies either by credit card or wire transfer," said Commissioner Schriro. "We need to continue to be vigilant, as the perpetrators of these crimes know no boundaries."

The fake letter was transmitted via "faxZero," apparently a free facsimile transmittal service, but could also have been sent to residents via email and US mail. Use of a free delivery service to communicate important information such as prize winnings may be a sign that the sender is not legitimate.

Numerous other signs identify this as a bogus message; these are highlighted on the following two pages.

"Becoming familiar with the signs of a scam are important in protecting yourself from fraud, and our **SmartConsumer.ct.gov** website offers more information under "[Scam Signals](#)" to arm yourself with," Rubenstein said. "In the case of this particular letter, do not respond with a payment, or you will certainly lose your money."

-end-

(2-page sample fax follows)

Media Contacts: Department of Consumer Protection: Claudette Carveth claudette.carveth@ct.gov 860-713-6022 (office)

Office of the Attorney General: Jaclyn M. Falkowski jaclyn.falkowski@ct.gov 860-808-5324 (office) 860-655-3903 (cell)

The date and time of transmission is outside business hours.



A legitimate sender is not likely to use a free fax service.

The "sender" and the e-mail address are a mismatch. The e-mail address is a general e-mail service.

Recipient Information
To: [REDACTED]
Fax #: 1860 [REDACTED]

Sender Information
From: Governor Dannel Malloy
Email address: ReadersDigestClaims@yahoo.com (from 66.54.118.122)
Sent on: Sunday, January 12 2014 at 1:55 AM EST

A basic web search shows that the IP address is in Jamaica.

This fax was sent using the FaxZero.com free fax service. FaxZero.com has a zero tolerance policy for abuse and junk faxes. If this fax is spam or abusive, please e-mail support@faxzero.com or send a fax to 800-980-6858. Specify fax #11082555. We will add your fax number to the block list.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

JANUARY 11, 2014



Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Mr. [Redacted]

The wording is awkward throughout the document.

As the Governor of Connecticut, I would like to take this opportunity to personally congratulate you on your magnificent award you are scheduled to receive in the near future. I truly am humbled to have you as a citizen in the State of Connecticut and I entrust that you make good with this gift and (to that) you contribute toward keeping this making this state and even better one.

There are various grammatical and typographical errors throughout the document.

The Readers Digest Sweepstakes Corporation has been in contact with my office in regards to the remittance of your prize of \$5m and a Mercedes-Benz automobile I order to acquire the permission to take this package across our state borders and have this gift remitted to you. The state of Connecticut however has strict laws and legislation (s) as it has to do with the transaction of Awards, Prizes or valuable gifts acquired I any formal competition of any kind. These laws state that "Any awardees (which) is a citizen of Connecticut whom is to be provided with gifts/prizes exceeding values of \$10,000.00 is subjected to pay all state taxes prior to the allowance of his/her award inside the state of Connecticut".

The taxes owed on (you) package include:

- Inbound Delivery Tax- \$1275.13
- Vehicle Excise Duty- \$424.83
- Document and Funds Transfer Tax- \$560.10

YOUR TOTAL TAXES HAVE AMOUNTED TO A SUM OF \$2260.06 WHICH MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE THE STATE WILL ALLOW YOUR AWARD TO BE DELIVERED IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

Please make payment via MoneyGram to the following agent:

Ruth Whetstone
Tippecanoe, IN 46570

No legitimate prize or award would require an up-front payment.

Sincerely,

Daniel Malloy
Governor

Any request to have payment sent via wire or pre-paid debit card should not be honored unless you know the recipient. Note also that con artists may request a dollar amount that is not high enough to require that the person picking up the money has to furnish a form of identification.

Payment is to an individual who is out of state.