

For Immediate Release

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

Laura A. Briggs, Clerk
46 East Ohio Street
Room 105
Indianapolis, IN 46204

U.S. DISTRICT COURT AND U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE WARN OF JURY DUTY SCAM

Scammers pose as U.S. Marshals and threaten arrest if victim does not pay a fine

PRESS RELEASE - REISSUED

Indianapolis, Indiana – October 18, 2018: On November 28, 2017, Chief U.S. District Judge Jane E. Magnus-Stinson and U.S. Attorney Josh Minkler warned the public of a nationwide scam in which callers pose as U.S. Marshals or other government officials and claim that the victim is about to be arrested for not appearing for jury duty, but can avoid arrest by paying a fine. The Southern District of Indiana has recently received an increased number of phone calls from victims regarding these scams and deems it of the utmost importance to reissue this Press Release to promote awareness and prevent more people from falling prey to such scams.

The scammers often provide information that seems very convincing, including the real names of federal judges or court employees, the location of the courthouse, court phone numbers, and case and badge numbers. Recent scammers have also included the victim's work address, home address, and date of birth, which further leads the victim to believe the call is legitimate. The caller then tells the victim they can avoid arrest by paying an immediate fine and walks them through purchasing a prepaid debit or gift card or making an electronic payment to satisfy the "fine."

On behalf of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Chief Judge Magnus-Stinson reiterates her statement from November 2017: "The people conducting this scam can be very convincing. They call their law-abiding victims and terrify them with threats of arrest and jail unless they pay up immediately. The U.S. Courts do not operate this way. In no instance will a court official, U.S. Marshal, or other government employee contact someone and demand payment or personal information by phone or email. This is a scam, and a lot of people are being hurt."

Mr. Minkler also stated in the November 2017 Press Release, "Those who take advantage of trusting citizens must know that there is zero tolerance for this type of behavior; fraudsters and other scammers will face the full force of federal law enforcement for such activity."

Residents of the Southern District of Indiana who believe they have been the victim of such a scam are encouraged to report the incident to the District Court Clerk's Office at 317-229-3700; the Federal Trade Commission at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>; and the U. S. Marshals Service at 317-226-6566.

Here is additional information on things to remember, who to call, and what to do if you are contacted by a scammer:

- A court will never ask for a credit/debit card number, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers over the phone for any purpose.
- A prospective juror who disregards a summons will be contacted by the District Court Clerk's Office by mail and may, in certain circumstances, be ordered to appear before a judge.
- A fine will never be imposed until after an individual has appeared in court and been given the opportunity to explain a failure to appear.
- Do not divulge personal information or financial information to unknown callers.
- Report scams to the District Court Clerk's Office, U.S. Marshals Service, or Federal Trade Commission.
- You can remain anonymous when you report.
- You can authenticate a call by contacting the Clerk's Office of the U.S. District Court in Indianapolis at (317) 229-3700 to verify that you were not summoned for jury duty and that the scam call did not come from the court.