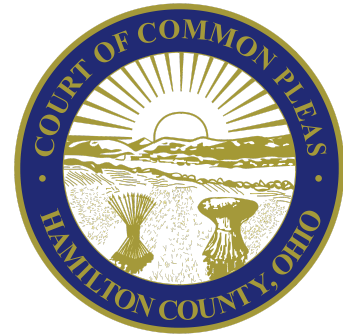


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## **Alert: Resurgence of Jury Duty Phone Scam Targets Hamilton County Residents**

### **Scammers Posing as County Officials Demand Payments for Alleged Jury Duty Violations**

Hamilton County, OH - The Hamilton County Courts, in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, are issuing a renewed warning to residents about a resurgence of a long-running phone scam that has recently intensified in the area. Scammers are falsely representing themselves as county officials, threatening individuals with fines for allegedly missing jury duty.

In recent weeks, the Hamilton County Courts have noticed a concerning resurgence of a phone scam that has been targeting our residents for some time. This scam is designed to exploit individuals by posing as county officials, demanding payments for alleged jury duty violations. While this isn't a new scheme, scammers have become more persistent and sophisticated with each resurgence.

The scam operates with fraudsters using a variety of tactics to deceive victims. They impersonate county staff, including names of Hamilton County Courthouse Jury Commission personnel, and even spoof their phone numbers to appear as legitimate calls from the Court's Jury Commission Office. Victims are told they owe fines for missing jury duty, and in many cases, they are pressured into making payments over the phone using a Green Dot card or similar reloadable prepaid debit cards.

One recent victim of this scam was contacted on his cell phone and told he owed a \$400 fine for allegedly missing jury duty. Unfortunately, he complied and made the payment before verifying the legitimacy of the

call with our Jury Commission. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the emotional and financial distress this scam can cause.

Court of Common Pleas Administrative Judge Christopher Wagner recommends residents hang up and call the Jury Commission Office at (513) 946-5879.

"This scam has been a persistent threat to our community. Unfortunately, the scammers are getting more persistent and convincing, at times posing as our Jury Commissioner, Bradley Seitz, and dropping the real names of local judges to add legitimacy to the call," said Administrative Judge Christopher Wagner. "Please call our wonderful staff with *all* jury service related questions - they're the experts on everything you might need to know about jury service in Hamilton County."

Court Administrator Patrick Dressing emphasizes, "We take this scam seriously and are using all avenues to combat it. It's crucial that residents remain vigilant and report any suspicious calls or messages."

"These scammers will try to keep you on the phone and threaten legal action if you hang up, but please know we would never do that," said Dressing. "Chances are if you haven't received a summons by mail or answered a jury questionnaire recently, you have not missed jury duty."

Administrative Judge Christopher Wagner adds, "We want Hamilton County residents to trust official correspondence from our Jury Commission and have confidence in this element of our justice system. Our goal is to ensure that residents can distinguish between legitimate court communications and fraudulent attempts to exploit them. Jury duty is an essential civic responsibility, and we are committed to upholding the integrity of the process while protecting our community from scams."

The Hamilton County Courts are in close communication with other local government entities to address this scam. We urge victims or anyone who suspects they have been targeted by this scam to report it to the Jury Commission Office at (513) 946-5879, and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office at (513)825-1500.

**We want to offer the following tips to help residents protect themselves from falling victim to phone scams:**

- Be cautious when receiving unsolicited calls or messages. Remember that in order to be called for jury duty in Hamilton County, you must first receive a summons in the mail.
- Verify the legitimacy of any call or message, especially those demanding payments or personal information.
- Do not make any payments or offer additional personal information over the phone without first confirming the legitimacy of the request.
- Report any suspicious communications to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, or the Jury Commission Office.

Seniors, a heavily targeted population for phone scammers, can also access valuable resources and assistance through the newly established Elder Justice Unit by the Hamilton County Prosecutor's office. This dedicated task force is committed to safeguarding seniors from scams, fraud, and financial exploitation. They offer educational programs, support services, and can be reached at 513-946-SCAM(7226) for assistance.

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For more information or other inquiries, please contact Court of Common Pleas Public Information Officer, Deidre Schardine, at (513)635-4308 or [dschardine@cms.hamilton-co.org](mailto:dschardine@cms.hamilton-co.org).