



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
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**EMAIL SCAMMERS PREYING ON HAWAII'S ELDERLY
AND VULNERABLE RESIDENTS**

HONOLULU – Attorney General David M. Louie announced today that the Department of the Attorney General's Investigations Division has opened a criminal investigation into an email fraud scheme involving false representations about compensation by the government of Ghana. As an added twist to what has become a common form of theft and identity theft on the internet, these criminals are falsely claiming that Attorney General Louie has verified the authenticity of their claims.

Attorney General Louie has no connection whatsoever with any scheme or promise to transfer money from a foreign government. Email from the addresses davidlouie@lawyer.com and attorneygeneraloffice@lawyer.com [sic] are being used to commit fraud and attempt to steal money.

Email fraud schemes have become very common and claim many victims, especially among Hawaii's vulnerable residents who are good, trusting people who may be impressionable and unable to understand these elaborate schemes.

These criminals send millions of emails in the hope that a small percentage of people who receive them will fall victim to their scams. In this latest email scam, the criminals say that the President of Ghana or various officials of the Ghana government have \$1.8 million to be paid to the victim. To make their scam appear more legitimate, the criminals represent themselves as the Attorney General of the State of Hawaii and claim that the Attorney General has verified that the money is ready to transfer to the victim.

What actually takes place is that the criminals require the victims to pay fees for various to prepare the money for transfer. This culminates in the victims being asked to provide their bank information for the transfer. When the victim fails to receive the payment of \$1.8 million they are frequently reluctant to believe they have been defrauded and continue to send money to the criminals in the hope that they will eventually receive money.

Do not be victim. Tips to avoid being a victim of cyber crime include:
Do not respond to unsolicited email;

Do not click on links contained within an unsolicited email;
Only log on to official websites of businesses;
Contact the business by phone or in person;
Never send money, bank account numbers, birthdates, social security numbers, drivers' license numbers, or any other private financial information to anyone or any business that you do not know.

"The elderly tend to be more trusting and more vulnerable to these scams. Friends and family members can help to protect our *kupuna* by helping them to be aware of these scams and being alert to money transfers made by them," said Attorney General Louie.

The varieties of email scams are only limited by the imaginations of the scammers. Generally, these criminals gain the confidence of their intended victims and then solicit money by promising money or gold in return, claiming a medical emergency, saying that a family member has been arrested or has become sick while traveling abroad, claiming a lottery has been won or the victim has inherited a fortune.

Anyone who suspects that they or a vulnerable family member have been the victim of an email scam is encouraged to contact the Department of the Attorney General's Investigations Division at (808) 586-1240 or email hawaiiag@hawaii.gov.

For more information, visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) E-Scams & Warnings webpage at <http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/e-scams>.

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