

## SAMPLE JURY SCAM EDITORIAL

### Stay Informed; Stay Alert. Beware of Scams!

As if we don't all have enough to deal with. Each and every one of us is bombarded with daily concerns and issues. Do we really need one more? Do we really need to be concerned about court scams? The answer is a resounding YES! The individuals who perpetrate these scams are hard at work each day thinking of new ways to prey upon innocent, law-abiding citizens. They are creative and sophisticated in their techniques. As a result, it is imperative that we all keep our guard up. Here is the gist of the scammer's dangerous and harmful game. Suspects, pretending to be local court staff or law enforcement officers, are calling citizens stating that they have failed to appear for jury duty or some other court appearance. They will leave the name of an individual who allegedly works within the justice system, and may even offer a specific badge number. They go so far as to set up false outgoing messages to mimic the message of a legitimate office or law enforcement officer or agency. They also have the ability to spoof real phone numbers to make potential victims believe that the call is coming from a legitimate source. These suspects go on to claim that either a warrant has been issued for the citizen's arrest, or that a large sum of money is owed as a fine for failing to appear. They then provide some method to pay the amount due without any physical interaction at all (by using pre-paid gift cards that are readily available and sold by most retailers). You provide the information on the card to the scammer, they get the money, and it is done. Just like that you are out hundreds or thousands of dollars. The victim thinks that they are abiding by the law and making up for an inadvertent oversight, and the scammers reap the lucrative benefits. Scams such as this have been reported throughout Texas and in other parts of the United States.

It is important to remember that under no circumstances will a member of any clerk's staff, court's staff, or law enforcement agency ever advise a citizen that a warrant for arrest has been issued, or that a fine is owed, by telephone. Furthermore, no justice system official will ever contact a citizen to make arrangements for the payment of any fine by telephone. Any formal notification of an arrest warrant or fine would come in written form on the letterhead of the office or agency sending the notification.

Any citizen who receives a call which appears to be suspicious in any way is encouraged to notify their local law enforcement agency immediately. Protect yourself. Stay informed. Stay alert. Beware of scams!