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ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES OF FUNDRAISING SCAMS TARGETING SCHOOL ATHLETIC SPONSORS

Las Vegas, NV—Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto today issued a consumer advisory concerning solicitations from advertising companies offering to place ads on school athletic posters as a fundraising effort. The advisory comes as a result of complaints from businesses who have been approached to be local school athletic sponsors.

One such company has targeted sponsors for the Pahrump Valley High School in Nye County. The advertising company claims to be a booster for the school and is authorized to print an athletic poster on the school's behalf, with money from the business ads on the poster provided to the school to support athletics. In some instances, the caller has claimed to be from the school athletic department itself. The company has contacted businesses in Pahrump and Las Vegas. Pahrump Valley High School did not authorize the poster and has not entered into any agreements to receive funds for the advertising.

"In addition to harming business owners and individuals who contribute financially, fundraising scams frustrate the legitimate fundraising efforts of the organization needing the financial assistance," said Attorney General Cortez Masto. "Businesses and consumers, understandably concerned about fraudulent fundraising, often choose not to donate rather than risk becoming victims."

Similar complaints of fundraising scams have been reported in the states of Washington, Oregon, Michigan, Wisconsin, and New York. In some cases, the advertising company sent invoices to the businesses, even after they declined to participate in the fundraiser. When the invoices were not paid, collection notices with threats of further action followed.

Fundraising scams concerning booster clubs often take place around the holidays, when school sports are active and community members are in the giving mood. Local, small businesses are often targeted because of their desire to improve their communities and, at the same time, receive positive, public advertising.

Before donating, the Bureau of Consumer Protection advises business owners and consumers to contact the school designated to confirm that their contributions are going to that school or one of its officially-recognized boosters and the organization soliciting the donation is legitimate.

Business owners or consumers who believe that they may have been targeted by, or fallen victim to, a fundraising scam are encouraged to contact the Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection at (702) 486-3194 in Las Vegas or (775) 684-1180 in Carson City. A complaint form, as well as other valuable consumer protection information, is also available on the Attorney General's website at www.ag.state.nv.us.

For other valuable consumer protection information, please visit the Bureau of Consumer Protection website, www.ag.state.nv.us/org/bcp/education.htm and/or the State of Nevada's general fraud information website, www.fightfraud.nv.gov

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