

Fraud Advisory

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Inspector General Warns Public About Phone Scheme Targeting Former Conn Clients

Gale Stallworth Stone, the Acting Inspector General of Social Security, is warning citizens about a phone scheme allegedly targeting former clients of Kentucky disability attorney Eric C. Conn. The Social Security Administration (SSA) and its Office of the Inspector General (OIG) have received reports that Kentucky citizens who used Conn's law firm to assist with applying for Social Security disability benefits have recently received suspicious calls from people claiming to be from SSA.

According to reports, the callers claim to be from SSA and offer citizens \$9,000 from a "Conn Client Compensation Fund" if the citizens send \$200 to the "Federal Reserve Bank of New York." The number associated with these calls is 202-681-5115. Those who have sent money have received additional calls; some callers report that citizens can receive greater compensation amounts if they send more money, while others threaten that citizens will be arrested if they do not send additional funds.

The Acting Inspector General is alerting citizens that SSA personnel are not making these calls, and the compensation fund described in the calls does not exist.

"This scheme appears to target economically vulnerable citizens and use scare tactics to defraud them of their resources," Acting Inspector General Stone said. "Citizens should be very careful and avoid engaging with these suspicious callers. If an unknown person pressures you on the phone into providing payments for odd reasons, don't think twice about hanging up."

If a person receives a similar suspicious call from someone alleging to be from SSA or the OIG, citizens may report that information to the OIG at 1-800-269-0271 or online via <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>. If a person has questions about any communication—phone call, email, letter, or text—that claims to be from SSA or the OIG, please contact your local Social Security office, or call Social Security's toll-free customer service number at 1-800-772-1213, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to verify its legitimacy. (Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals can call SSA's TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.)

Conn [pledged guilty in federal court in March 2017](#) to participating in a scheme with a former SSA administrative law judge and multiple doctors that involved the submission of thousands of falsified medical documents to SSA to support disability applications. As a result of the scheme, Conn and his co-conspirators obligated SSA to pay \$550 million in lifetime benefits for these fraudulent submissions. Conn is scheduled to be sentenced in July 2017; however, on June 2, 2017, he removed his electronic monitoring device and fled. On June 3, 2017, the FBI issued an arrest warrant for Conn for violating the conditions of his bond.

For more information, contact Andrew Cannarsa, OIG's Communications Director, at (410) 965-2671.