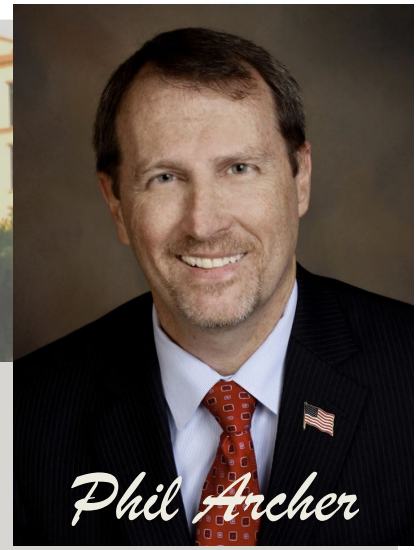




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The Monthly Brief

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FRAUD FREE FLORIDA

In response to Florida's ongoing fraud epidemic, a new website and initiative known as "Fraud Free Florida" was launched by the office of Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis. The idea is to educate and protect Florida residents, especially seniors, from cyber crooks and scam artists.



Bringing together state law enforcement officials, state attorneys, private sector stakeholders, and fraud investigative teams, the goal will be to help Florida stay ahead of new scams and address the rampant fraud already taking place.

FraudFreeFlorida.com serves as a one-stop-shop for reporting fraud and learning about ways to protect yourself from scams.

Visiting the site presents easy to follow links for reporting Insurance Fraud, Identity Theft, Workers Compensation, Arson, and Public Assistance Fraud.

The site also includes a very helpful section dedicated to [Fraud Education](#). It contains information on more than three dozen types of scams currently operating in our area, with clear easy to understand guides and tips to avoid becoming a victim.

There's also a Resource tab with links to organizations where consumers can get help reporting and protecting themselves from scammers. *Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis

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New Tech Computer Scams

[The Sun Sentinel](#) reported that a South Florida women lost \$1000 on a "Geek Squad" email scam. Diane B. 68, got an email claiming to be from Geek Squad saying her tech support plan had renewed at \$392.95 for 3 years. To cancel, she'd need to call the number in the email within 24 hours, which she did. Next she got an email saying they mistakenly refunded \$4900 to her credit card, and to call to arrange repayment. Diane was told to download a remote access program "Team Viewer" that was used to log onto her banking account and transfer \$1000.

Posing as a tech from a company like Microsoft or Apple, scammers say there's a problem with your computer ([Example call](#)). After asking for remote access, they perform a fake test, make phony repairs and try to collect a fee. **Pop-up Warnings:** A message appears on your screen that looks like a warning from your operating system or anti-virus software. It displays a number to call for help and the same scam begins. **Online Ads:** Fake websites show up in online search results for tech support or as ads online. Again calling or contacting them triggers the con. **Refund Scam:** You're called and offered a refund for tech support or security software that's going out of business. To provide the refund they'll ask for your banking or credit card info. But that leads to a charge, not a credit.

To learn more about how to avoid and report Tech Support Scams, visit the [FTC website](#) and be sure to [watch the story](#) of one victim and how he's fighting back. *FTC.gov

ASSISTED LIVING STIMULUS FRAUD 2.0



The [FTC is again warning consumers](#) of reports that some nursing homes and assisted living facilities are again trying to obtain the federal stimulus payments intended for their residents on Medicaid. Then they require residents to sign over the funds to the facility. The facilities are wrongly trying to claim that because the person is on Medicaid, the facility gets to keep the stimulus payment.

According to the CARES Act, those economic impact payments are a tax credit. And tax law says that tax credits don't count as "resources" for federal benefits programs, like Medicaid. That means the nursing homes and assisted living facilities can't take that money from their residents just because they're on Medicaid. And, if they took it already, get in touch with your [state attorney general](#) and ask them to help you get it back. You should also file a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#).

If a loved one lives in a nursing or ALF facility and you're not sure what happened to their payment, talk with them soon. Consider sharing this info with the facility to make sure management is aware of how the law works and to avoid a problem before it happens. To get documents that backup that argument go to the [federal tax law](#) and the [Congressional Summary](#) (page 3). You can also get more info from the National Center on Law & Elder Rights for people who live in [nursing homes](#) or [assisted living facilities](#).

Consumers can get more fraud info at FloridaConsumerHelp.com or call 1-800-HELPFLA (435-7352) * Source FDOACS Consumer E Letter