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*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL CAUTIONS DONORS TO BE WARY OF SCAMS TIED TO HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

Chicago — In the wake of widespread destruction and loss of life caused by Hurricanes Fiona and Ian, Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois residents who plan to donate to assist those affected to be on the lookout for fundraising scams.

"I want to urge Illinoisans donating to relief efforts to take the time to look into the charitable organization before donating," Raoul said. "Taking that extra step will help ensure your donations reach legitimate causes that directly contribute to helping the people of Puerto Rico, Florida, South Carolina and other affected locations."

Potential donors should find out if the charity is providing direct aid or raising money for other groups. Donors may want to avoid the middleman and give directly to charities that have a presence in the region. Attorney General Raoul advised donors to ask questions to determine the donations' ultimate recipients to ensure that the organizations are equipped to effectively provide aid.

Donors who are seeking to support the hurricane relief efforts should be wary of requests for clothing, food or other in-kind donations, which may not be appropriate. Unless the charitable organization has the staff and infrastructure to distribute such aid, the donations may be more of a burden than a help. Ask the charity about transportation and distribution plans, and be wary of those who are not experienced in relief assistance.

Attorney General Raoul suggested the following tips to best ensure a donation will be used for its intended purpose:

- **Ask how much of your donation will go to the charity and how much will be used to pay fundraising costs.** Solicitors must give you this information if you ask.
- **Pay close attention to the name of the charity.** Some fraudulent charities use names that sound or look like those of legitimate organizations to mislead you.
- **Ask questions about the charity.** Donate only when your questions have been answered, and you are certain your money will be used according to your wishes. Ask questions like whether the charity is registered with the Illinois Attorney General's office and what percentage of the money the charity takes in goes to fundraising, administration and charitable programming.
- **Exercise caution when giving online.** Spam email solicitations that appear to be linked to relief groups could be from persons trying to take advantage of donors. Be wary of any online solicitations from unfamiliar charities.
- **Do not pay in cash.** For security and tax purposes, pay by check. Be sure to write the full official name of the charity on your check – do not use abbreviations.
- **Request written information.** A legitimate charity will provide you with information outlining its mission, how your donation will be distributed, and proof that your contribution is tax deductible.
- **Do not donate if the solicitor uses high-pressure tactics, asks for cash payment or insists on sending someone to pick up your donation.** These are all hallmarks of a scam.

Raoul encouraged donors to contact his office's Charitable Trust Bureau to report suspicious solicitations by calling 312-814-2595. The Attorney General recommended that, whenever possible, individuals keep notes

detailing the date and time of the call, the organization's name and the name of the solicitor. Raoul also advised people to try to remember the "pitch" the organization makes, as well as any other pertinent information.

Under Illinois law, fundraisers and charitable organizations are required to register each year with the Attorney General's office. To assist potential donors in making wise giving decisions, Attorney General Raoul provides important information about charitable organizations such as income, expenditures and programs. That information and the Attorney General's Charitable Trust Database are available on the [Attorney General's website](#).