

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Michigan AG and AARP Michigan Alert Michiganders to Grandparent Scam

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel and AARP Michigan President Paula Cunningham today urged Michigan grandparents to avoid a scam that bilked a Zeeland couple out of \$16,000. The scheme — known as the Grandparents Scam — preys on vulnerable senior citizens with con artists posing as a grandchild or other relative in distress. A prior Consumer Alert was issued from Nessel's Consumer Education team.

A Zeeland couple was talked into sending cash via FedEx and obtaining multiple Home Depot gift cards to later share the numbers via phone. Zeeland Police detailed that despite the concern expressed by employees at both locations, the scammer had already manipulated the grandparents enough to ensure they'd follow through with the demands.

"Our job is to protect the people of Michigan — and this consumer alert is an important way to do that. It's equally important to be aware of ways in which people try to get you to hand over your money," said Nessel. "It's unacceptable for bad actors to exploit our love and concern for our family members for criminal purposes. My office is committed to ensuring that our state residents are protected from these types of despicable acts and that Michiganders are not being taken advantage of."

Nessel details the following steps on how to verify, spot and stop a scam:

- Double check. Attempt to reach the loved one and/or confirm the status or whereabouts with other family members.
- Spot the red flags. If the caller is frantic on the phone and demands funds be wire transferred, sent in cash, or via gift cards—it's probably fraud. Additionally, the caller may have just enough personal information to persuade and will likely instruct you not to tell anyone.
- Slow down. Although you will be pressured to do so, do not act right away. During the call, do not assist scammers in owning the identity of your loved one by guessing the name. Force them to tell you who they are.
- Never provide personal identifying information to an incoming caller. Never provide your bank account, credit card information, or social security number to someone who calls you. Hang up and call the company or individual back on a phone number you know to be correct to verify.

"Unfortunately, scams like this one are all too familiar," said AARP President Cunningham. "Con artists have many tricks for stealing your money and people need to be ever vigilant about watching out for the bad guys."

In addition to contacting local law enforcement officials and the Michigan Attorney General's office, Cunningham recommended that members of the community visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network to

help them avoid being victims of fraud and scams. Find prevention tips and information about scams happening at [aarp.org/fraud](http://aarp.org/fraud).

For more information, view the full Consumer Alert [here](#). If you believe you or someone you know has been a victim of a grandparent scam, you can file a consumer complaint with the Michigan Attorney General's office at [mi.gov/agcomplaints](http://mi.gov/agcomplaints).