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CHIEF OF POLICE

MEDIA RELEASE

**IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

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**MEDIA
CONTACT**

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SCAM PREVENTION ALERT

The Westminster Police Department would like to prevent community members from becoming the victim of a telephone or email scam. These scams continue to be reported regularly to police. Scams often involve vulnerable individuals, such as members of our senior community. There are many types of scams. However, most scams have common factors:

1. They involve a threat of some type where the caller pretends to be in a position of authority, such as the IRS or a federal or local law enforcement agency.
2. The caller informs the victim that the victim will receive a sum of money or will correct a financial mistake by providing the caller with banking information.
3. The caller instructs the victim to take immediate action that involves providing the caller with access to money or instructs the victim to purchase gift cards.

Common scam types include:

1. Threatening calls from the IRS
2. Threatening calls from law enforcement advising a family member is in peril
3. Threats from banking institutions regarding accounts
4. False lottery or other financial windfall calls or notices
5. Technical support scams requiring the victim to provide credentials

What you should do:

1. Hang up on the caller. Do not provide any information. Do not take any financial action.
2. Disregard emails requesting you to purchase gift cards or provide credentials.
3. Call the actual institution if in doubt.
4. Call your local police department for advice or to report the scam.
5. Have a prevention discussion with vulnerable family members and friends.

You can also report scams to the following companies if you purchased gift cards:

Amazon: 1-888-280-4331, Google Play: 1-855-466-4438, iTunes: 1-800-275-2273

If you want to learn more about financial scams, you may contact Lt. Jeffrey Schuster of the Westminster Police Department at (410)848-3846.

WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT
TIPS LINE—(410) 857-8477