

ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION

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Fighting financial scams during a pandemic! Join statewide Tele-Town Hall on May 18th with Alabama's AARP, BBB, Attorney General, and Securities Commission.

MONTGOMERY ALABAMA (May 15, 2020) - Citizens of Alabama are invited to call in toll-free to participate in a Tele-Town Hall and listen to experts discuss issues relating to consumers and their financial wellbeing during this serious and most shocking pandemic.

Alabama citizens may participate Monday, May 18, 2020 from 5:50 – 6:50PM CDT by calling: 1-888-485-5470 (no pin required). AARP is the sponsor and host of this event which is projected to have from 5,000 – 10,000 or more citizens of Alabama on the call at any given time.

A panel of experts will address crimes targeting citizens during disasters and this COVID-19 crisis. The panel of crime fighters includes: Attorney General Steve Marshall, Alabama Securities Director Joseph Borg, Better Business Bureau of North Alabama President Elizabeth Garcia, Bill Hawkins head of AARP Advocacy/Outreach, Alabama State Office and host.

Meet the panel experts:

- Bill Hawkins is the AARP Associate State Director for Advocacy/Outreach. He organizes and promotes events throughout Alabama that help protect Alabamians.
- Elizabeth Garcia is President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of North Alabama (BBB). The BBB is the leader in advancing marketplace trust, is an unbiased non-profit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior.
- Steve Marshall is the Alabama Attorney General and was sworn in as the forty-eighth attorney general of the state of Alabama on February 10, 2017. Prior to taking office as attorney general, Marshall was the district attorney for Marshall County, a post he held for sixteen years.
- Joseph Borg, Director of the Alabama Securities Commission has served in this position since 1994. Borg is the only state securities regulator to serve three terms as the elected president of the North American Securities Administrators Association during its 100-year history.

AARP Alabama Associate State Director for Advocacy Outreach, Bill Hawkins said, "AARP is proud to provide this outreach initiative to help Alabamians protect themselves. We are grateful for the panel's participation to help citizens 50 years and over."

Alabama N. Better Business Bureau, President Garcia said, "Out of all BBB ScamTracker reports received from consumers and businesses in March and April 2020, 53% were related to COVID-19. The top two types of scams were related to the sale of masks or Stimulus checks, grants and loans. Now more than ever, consumers and businesses alike check everything out before making a purchase or providing personally identifiable information to strangers. Better Business Bureau reminds everyone to remain

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vigilant to avoid scams related to the virus, use necessary, common sense precautions when traveling, and find reliable sources to stay informed about what to do as the virus spreads. Check out the BBB Coronavirus Resource page more scam tips and information at www.bbb.org/council/coronavirus. The BBB is here to help you in these trying times.”

Attorney General Marshall says, “We are looking forward to this opportunity to share with Alabamians practical advice on how to avoid becoming victims of consumer scams, particularly those aimed at our senior population. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, my office — in conjunction with other state and federal agencies — has been active in monitoring and investigating complaints of everything from price gouging to identity theft. The public should always be on guard against fraud and report any suspicious activity to authorities. You may direct consumer fraud complaints to the Alabama Attorney General Consumer Hotline at 1-800-392-5658, or visit our website at www.alabamaag.gov.”

Alabama Securities Commission Director Borg said, “Some of the best frauds are ripped straight from disasters in the headlines like pandemics, oil spills and tornados. We want to educate the public on how to identify, protect themselves and report suspected frauds. Information is everywhere, the problem that many citizens are having is being able to tell the difference between legitimate offers and fraudulent offers. After attending the Tele-Town Hall, the citizens will be better equipped on how to handle the situations better than before. Before you invest your hard-earned money, call us at 1-800-222-1253 and verify registration of the person and the products being offered. Go to www.asc.alabama.gov for free financial education and fraud prevention materials.”

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For further information contact Dan Lord, Education and Public Affairs Manager, 334-353-4858.

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