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Warning Issued as Fraudulent Sites Target People Seeking Social Security Cards

The alert follows concerns that scammers are using fake websites, social media accounts, and direct messages to collect Social Security numbers, birthdates, credit card details, and other personal information from unsuspecting victims.

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett is urging Virgin Islanders to be on high alert for scams involving Social Security cards after a national warning from the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General reminded the public that new and replacement Social Security cards are provided free of charge. The warning comes amid reports that fraudulent websites and impersonators are charging people for services the federal government provides at no cost.

In a release issued Tuesday, Plaskett said the scam risk is especially serious because it can involve both financial loss and the theft of sensitive personal information. The warning applies to services that the SSA provides without charge, including first-time Social Security card applications, replacement cards for lost documents, and name changes.

Residents are being told they should never pay for any of those services. Assistance is available directly through the Social Security Administration, including through the agency's official number-card resources, its toll-free line at 1-800-772-1213, and through a personal my Social Security account for eligible individuals seeking to apply online for a replacement card.

"I want every Virgin Islander to know that you should never have to pay for a Social Security card — not a new one, not a replacement, not for any reason," said Congresswoman Plaskett.

"Scammers are actively targeting communities throughout the country with false claims about Social Security card fees. I urge all Virgin Islanders to go directly to the official SSA website or call their hotline, and to avoid third-party websites that may seek to steal your money or your personal information."

According to the release, the SSA Office of the Inspector General has warned the public to be cautious of imposter websites and fraudulent social media accounts designed to collect private details such as Social Security numbers, birthdates, and credit card information.

The release also points to Section 1140 of the Social Security Act, which explicitly prohibits misleading communications related to the SSA and restricts charging fees for services the agency offers for free. Violators, according to the release, are subject to financial penalties.

Plaskett urged residents to keep three steps in mind when confronted with suspicious communications tied to Social Security matters.

The first is to pause. If someone receives an unexpected call, text, email, letter, or social media message, the release says they should be skeptical and ask whether it could be a scam.

The second is to protect. Residents are being advised to guard their personal and financial information, and to speak with someone they trust before sharing sensitive details or sending money.

The third is to report. The release directs the public to the SSA's scam-reporting resources for suspected Social Security-related scams, and also notes that the SSA Office of the Inspector General posts scam alerts on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn. Additional consumer protection information is also available through the Federal Trade Commission.

"Our seniors, our families, and our most vulnerable residents deserve to access the federal benefits and services they are entitled to without fear of exploitation," Congresswoman Plaskett concluded.

"I will always fight to ensure that Virgin Islanders are informed, protected, and empowered. If you or someone you know believes they have been targeted by one of these scams, please report it immediately and do not provide any further personal information."