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Dear Sir or Madam:

Recently, we have received inquiries from citizens regarding a telephone solicitation from out of state or anonymous callers. Identity thieves trick the unwary into revealing their personal details by telling them they've failed to report for jury duty and warrants for their arrest are being issued unless they pay a fine. This is a real fraud with potential for financial harm. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

The scammer calls claiming to work for the Sheriff, the court, or the Clerk's Office and claims you have failed to report for jury duty. He tells you that a warrant has been issued for your arrest. The victim will often rightly respond they never received the jury duty notification. The scammer then asks the victim for confidential information for "verification" purposes. Specifically, the scammer asks for the victim's Social Security number, birth date, and sometimes even for credit card numbers and other private information — exactly what the scammer needs to commit identity theft.

It is easy to see why this works. The victim is clearly caught off guard, and is understandably upset at the prospect of a warrant being issued for his or her arrest. So, the victim is much less likely to be vigilant about protecting their confidential information. In reality, we will never call you to ask for social security numbers and other private information. In fact, we rarely, if ever, call prospective jurors. If we call, it is in response to a message you left or an email you sent to us.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Never give out your Social Security number, credit card numbers or other personal confidential information when you receive a telephone call.

If such a caller insists upon "verifying" your information with you, have them read the data to you from their notes, with you saying yea or nay to it rather than the other way around.

Examine your credit card and bank account statements every month, keeping an eye peeled for unauthorized charges. Immediately challenge items you did not approve.

This jury duty scam is just one of a series of identity theft scams where scammers use the phone to try to get people to reveal personal confidential information. It doesn't matter "why" they are calling — all the reasons are just variants of the same scam.

Your privacy rights are important to us and we make every effort to protect the documents and information you provide in interacting with the Courts. I felt it was important for you to understand what precautions should be taken. Again, you have a standing invitation to visit the Clerk's Office and see the good work that is being performed. The Clerk of Superior and State Courts records account for 50 to 60 percent of all the records created each year in your county government. Our records date back to the birth of the County and it is my honor and that of my staff to build upon and care for the history of Rockdale County, the State of Georgia and to protect your privacy in the process.

Sincerely,
Ruth A. Wilson, Clerk

PRESERVING THE PAST WHILE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE