



Office of Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq. Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller

For Immediate Release – April 22, 2015

JURY SERVICE FRAUD SCHEME – PUBLIC NOTICE

The Office of Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq., would like to inform Pasco County citizens of a revived fraud scheme so they may protect themselves from becoming victims. Scammers posing as law enforcement officers from the Warrants Division call citizens threatening jail time for failing to appear for jury service.

These scammers are very persuasive. They have detailed personal information, such as a citizen's name, address, and, in some cases, partial social security numbers. Scammers convince citizens that law enforcement has a warrant for the citizen's arrest and demand immediate payment from the citizen to avoid arrest. The scammer remains on the line instructing the citizen where to go to purchase cash-loaded cards. After the cards are purchased, the citizen is instructed to provide the card and pin numbers over the phone, and to mail the cash-loaded cards to the scammer.

Be advised: Jury summonses are sent through regular mail. If you failed to appear for jury service, an order to show cause may be mailed to you to appear before the court. The Clerk & Comptroller's Office never contacts jurors who failed to appear by phone. Additionally, law enforcement would not demand payment, in lieu of arrest, due to failure to appear for jury service.

Tips to protect yourself:

- The Clerk & Comptroller's Office **never calls** or **emails** citizens **to request payment for missing jury service**.
- If a citizen misses jury service, the court may issue an *order to show cause* notice that is served by the sheriff's office.
- Citizens should always verify Clerk & Comptroller or law enforcement callers by contacting the agency at the phone numbers provided through the agency's website or the phone book.
- Do not provide personal information or financial payment(s) to any unverified source.

The Clerk & Comptroller's Office is working closely with the Pasco County Sheriff's Office to keep the public informed and will remain vigilant as the investigation continues. If you receive any suspicious or unsolicited communication about jury service, contact the Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller's Office at (800) 368-2411 x8031.

The Florida Constitution established a Clerk & Comptroller as an elected public trustee in 1838 and established at the county level a system of checks and balances to serve and protect the interests of the public. The Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller, Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq., is an elected Constitutional Officer who, under Florida Statutes, provides information management, rePasco County Clerk & Comptroller record keeping, and financial management to the Circuit Court, County Court, and County Government. The Mission Statement of the Office is "We serve with integrity, professionalism, and compassion as we safeguard our customers' interests."