

**STATE OF VERMONT  
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**ATTORNEY GENERAL, SECRETARY OF STATE WARN PUBLIC OF FRAUDULENT  
"FUNDLY" SCAM TARGETING MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS**

This morning an email sent from a fake account meant to mimic an official Vermont Secretary of State email address was sent to some municipal officials soliciting donations for a family "in dire need" claiming a 3-year old girl "desperately needs your help." Anyone with a heart is likely to be moved by such a plea, especially around Thanksgiving, a time when Vermonters actively look to help their neighbors in need. But, this Thanksgiving season, Vermont Attorney General TJ Donovan and Secretary of State Jim Condos are warning Vermonters about a scam targeting municipal officials that preys on the good intentions of others.

Secretary Condos says the email purporting to be from his office to help a child in need is false. "My first priority is always to help Vermonters engage with state government and to assure them of the integrity of state government," said Secretary of State Jim Condos. "So, it's especially important to raise the alarm when we see a phony email misusing the name and logo of state government for fraudulent purposes," he said. "It's especially alarming that whoever sent this email is preying on the sympathies and generosity of Vermonters."

The email solicits money “to help support Linda,” a 3-year old girl supposedly suffering from a rare disease. It does so using the Secretary of State’s office name and logo without its knowledge or permission. The email is sent from an address designed to look like a Vermont Secretary of State email. It is in no way affiliated with the Secretary of State’s office. The email appears to be targeting municipal officials, whose email addresses are publicly available.

There is no indication that the state system has been hacked to obtain email addresses to send this fraudulent request. IT specialists at the Secretary of State’s office say the email originated in Nigeria and then bounced off of a Godaddy server hosted in Singapore. The Secretary of State immediately contacted the Fundly.com website operators to request that it suspend any activity on the account, as well as the Vermont Attorney General’s office to work together to ensure the public is aware of this fraudulent activity.

“Vermonters should not donate to any scam fundraisers that misappropriate the name, seal, or office of any state agency,” said Attorney General T.J. Donovan. “We encourage Vermonters to help their neighbors in need during the holidays,” he said. “But be cautious and know that your charitable dollars are going to legitimate causes serving real families,” he said. The Attorney General said he has referred the scam email to the Vermont cyber-crimes unit of the FBI, and is partnering with the Secretary of State to get the word out to local officials and other Vermonters who may receive the scam email.

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