

is the largest consumer protection mailing in our history. It will provide information you can keep by the phone to help you distinguish between fraudulent and legitimate telemarketers. The bottom line is this: You must familiarize yourself with the telltale signs of fraud, and don't give out important personal financial information to an unknown caller.

We're also establishing a new toll free number that will soon be up and running to help people who believe they've been the victims of telemarketing fraud. It will provide links to law enforcement officials who will be able to share information and track down patterns of fraud. As many as 1½ million callers are expected to utilize this new service every year. We've also created a new website for consumers to receive fraud prevention information and even file a complaint on-line. It can be found at www.consumer.gov.

With our actions today we're sending a clear message to fraudulent telemarketers: We've got your number, and we won't let you off the hook.

As we close out the budget season in Washington, I urge Congress to send the same message, to reject arbitrary, across-the-board cuts that will undermine our law enforcement efforts and instead send me a budget that will protect our families and our communities and advance our values.

Let's all answer the call of the American people, put partisanship aside, and finish the work we've been sent here to do.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:15 p.m. on November 5 in the Room 137 at Englewood High School in Chicago, IL, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Protecting Consumers From Fraud

November 6, 1999

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Protecting Consumers from Fraud

My Administration has taken unprecedented steps to safeguard consumers through vigorous law enforcement and prevention, but we must continue to do more. For example, we have announced new initiatives on Internet fraud and identity theft that call on law enforcement to step up their efforts on behalf of consumers. In addition, as part of my 21st Century Crime bill, I announced several new measures that will help protect elderly Americans from fraudulent activities. My crime bill will give the Department of Justice new authority to block and terminate telephone service to illegal telemarketers. In addition, it will give Federal prosecutors new tools to protect nursing home residents from abuse and neglect; to fight health care fraud; and to safeguard retirement and pension plans.

Consumers are often unaware of where to receive assistance. A recent Postal Inspection Service survey found that 12 percent of respondents admitted to being a victim of fraud, but

that 25 percent of all respondents did not know where to go for help if they were the victim of telemarketing or mail fraud.

Today I announced the "kNOw Fraud" project, which is a public-private partnership of the United States Postal Service, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Association of Attorneys General, and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Even though violent crime rates are at record lows, illegal telemarketing fraud costs Americans an estimated \$40 billion every year. Project "kNOw Fraud" will help arm consumers with needed information so that they can protect themselves from telemarketing fraud. This initiative shows how Government can serve the public when working in close coordination to vigorously enforce consumer protection laws and keep the public informed about new scams and how to avoid them.

Federal agencies such as the FTC and the SEC also have initiated important consumer

Nov. 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

protection initiatives in order to thwart fraudulent activities. The FTC's Consumer Response Center takes consumer complaints and inputs them into a centralized database, the Consumer Sentinel, which is available for use by Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies across the country and in Canada. Since its launch, Consumer Sentinel counts some 214 partner organizations that have contributed an estimated 200,000 complaints to the database, allowing law enforcement officials to ascertain whether a complaint is an isolated incident or part of a wider pattern of activity. Last year, the SEC's Office of Investor Education and Assistance handled more than 60,000 consumer complaints and inquiries, many of which dealt with telemarketing or online fraud. In addition, the SEC's website warns the public about fast-breaking scams and tells consumers how to investigate investment opportunities.

Recognizing the need for closer coordination, earlier this year you directed the Council on White Collar Crime to coordinate and bolster the consumer protection activities of the Department of Justice, the FTC, the SEC, the Postal

Inspection Service, and others. To further these efforts, I direct you to report back to me within 6 months with a plan (1) to better prevent consumer fraud activities and (2) improve coordination among the Federal Government's consumer protection activities to ensure that each agency's expertise is considered. In creating this plan, you should consult with all interested parties, including other Federal agencies and offices, including the FTC and SEC; State and local law enforcement; and consumer agencies and consumers. This plan also should build on efforts of the private sector, including nonprofits, to protect consumers.

These steps, taken together, will help to protect consumers from fraud and also help to save consumers millions of dollars in the next millennium.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 5 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on November 6. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on the Death of Joseph Serna, Jr.

November 7, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mayor Joe Serna earlier today. Joe was an extraordinary public servant, educator, father, husband, and friend. He was a great

leader of Sacramento and a source of inspiration to the Hispanic community and all Americans. Our Nation has lost a remarkable man. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran

November 5, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect

beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran emergency declared in 1979 is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication. Similar notices have been sent annually to the Congress and published in the *Federal Register*