



## FEDERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND TRAVELERS - NEWS RELEASE -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Grandparents Are Being Victimized By a Common Scam**

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, February 23, 2010 - Well-meaning senior citizens who think they are helping a grandchild in distress are becoming victims of a new wave of the so-called "Grandparent Scam." So far, the scam has targeted grandparents in more than a dozen states and Canadian provinces and has stolen as much as \$19,000 from one victim alone.

In making its members aware of the scam, the Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT) quoted Stephen A. Cox, president and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus: "The grandparent scam preys on the love of a grandparent for a grandchild and has proven to be an extremely lucrative con for scammers," said Cox. "Fortunately, this is an easy scam to avoid as long as you don't let your emotions get the best of you."

Typically, the grandparents receive a frantic phone call from someone claiming to be their grandchild. The scammer explains that he or she has gotten into trouble -- often in Canada -- and needs help. The "grandchild" might claim he or she caused a car accident or was arrested for drug possession. With the new wave of calls, victims are also contacted by someone claiming to be a police officer or lawyer representing the grandchild in court.

The "grandchild" pleads to the grandparents not to tell his or her parents and asks that they wire thousands of dollars for such reasons as posting bail, repairing the grandchild's car, covering lawyer's fees, or even paying hospital bills for a person the grandchild injured in a car accident. One couple in Wisconsin recently sent \$19,000 to scammers posing as their grandson and his supposed lawyer.

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be your grandchild in distress, don't disclose any information before you have confirmed it really is your grandchild. If a caller says "It's me, grandma!" ask a simple question that your grandchild would know such as what grade school he or she attended or his/her middle name.

If you have fallen victim to the scam, report the incident immediately to local police and your state Attorney General's office. If there is a request to wire money to Canada, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre has established the PhoneBusters hotline and Web site to report such fraud. Reports can be filed easily online through the PhoneBusters site at: [www.phonebusters.com](http://www.phonebusters.com), or by phone, toll free at, 1-888-495-8501.

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This news bulletin has been issued by The Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT), a consumer organization formed under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the District of Columbia in 1984. FACT serves more than 1 million consumers nationwide. Additional information on FACT may be found in the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, and by visiting the association's Web site ([www.usafact.org](http://www.usafact.org)). Informative, unbiased news bulletins are regularly disseminated by FACT to help its members remain current on matters which might seriously impact their lives. The association does not offer support to -- and does not receive support from -- any political party or movement. In addition to publishing consumer-related reports, the association provides more than 30 benefits for its members, ranging from [medical insurance](#) and [dental discounts](#) to [prescription drug savings](#) and [scholarships](#). FACT's administrative office is located at 318 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, IL 62025.