Immigration Service Issues Warning about ID Theft Scam Targeting Legal Immigrants

August 22, 2013 - The US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) has issued a warning about a new telemarketing scam that targets legal immigrants (and non-immigrants legally living in the United States on work visas) for identity theft. Victims of the scam receive a phone call with a "spoofed" caller ID number displayed. That number identifies the call as coming from the Immigration Service. If the call is answered, the person placing the call tells the victim that there is a problem with their immigration paperwork and that they need to pay a fine to take care of the issue.

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var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
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})();

(function() {
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po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
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During the course of the phone call, victims are asked to provide a wide variety of highly personal information that can lead to identity theft. The information requested can include passport number, social security or tax identification number, alien ID number, current address and credit card information.

USCIS does not initiate calls requesting payment and, if they are initiating a call, they already have the current address and identification information for the person being called. Although immigrants to the US may be charged for certain services provided by USCIS, and request for payment will be mailed on USCIS letterhead. And anyone who receives such a request via the mail can call USCIS at 1-800-375-5283 to verify its legitimacy.

Anyone receiving a phone call such as the one described above should refuse to provide any personal information to the call and should immediately call USCIS at the number provided above.

Anyone who believes that they may have been victimized already by this scam should file a complaint with the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. Additionally, they should start watching their credit card statements carefully and notify their credit card company to be on the lookout for fraudulent charges. If their credit was established outside of the United States and their credit cards issued by a non-US bank, US law may not provide adequate financial protection so bank/credit card company notification is extremely important.

Potential victims that have established credit in the United States should also call Annual Credit Report at 877-322-8228 to get a current copy of their credit report. This is the only source for free credit reports in the United States that is mandated by law and which has no strings attached.

USCIS has established a web page for immigrants and work visa holders who want more information on steps they can take to avoid becoming fraud victims. That site page can be found by clicking here.

byJim Malmberg
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