



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Frank G. Jackson



Scam Claims Obama Will Pay Utility Bills

This nationwide scam has reached Cleveland. Consumers should never give Social Security numbers to unknown companies and may contact Consumer Affairs (216.664.4529) or the Better Business Bureau (<http://cleveland.bbb.org/>) to verify the legitimacy of offers.

A new scam is sweeping the nation by claiming that President Obama will pay your utility bills through a new federal program. Customers of utility business FirstEnergy Corp. have reported the scam, and several other energy companies issued warnings to their customers about it.

How the Scam Works:

Consumers have been contacted in person and through fliers, social media and text messages with claims that President Obama is providing credits or applying payments to utility bills.

To receive the money, scammers claim they need the consumers' social security and bank routing numbers. In return, customers are given a phony bank routing number that will supposedly pay their utility bills. In reality, there is no money, and customers believe they have paid their bills when in fact they have not.

Tips to Avoid Falling for this Scam:

- Never provide your social security number, credit card number or banking information to anyone requesting it over the phone or at your home unless you initiated the contact and feel confident with whom you are speaking.
- If you receive a call claiming to be your utility company and feel pressured for immediate payment or personal information, hang up the phone and call the customer service number on your utility bill.
- Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, natural gas pipes or appliances unless you have scheduled an appointment or have reported a utility problem. Also, ask utility employees for proper identification.
- Always think safety first. Do not give in to high pressure tactics over the phone for information or in person to get into your home.

For **more information** about scams:

<http://www.bbb.org/us/article/president-obama-is-not-offering-to-pay-your-utility-bills-34928>