

Falmouth Police Department
March 3, 2003

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Falmouth Police Chief David Cusolito says that the office of Attorney General Tom Reilly has received numerous inquiries and complaints with regard to charitable fund raising organizations soliciting funds in Massachusetts. One such organization which has recently come to their attention is the "Police Protective Fund". This is a tax-exempt section 501(c)(3) organization based in Austin, Texas. It is registered in Massachusetts and in compliance with the law thus they may legally conduct solicitations here in Massachusetts. "All-Pro Telemarketing", a New Jersey based professional fund raiser, handles the telemarketing.

The Police Protective Service has been soliciting in Falmouth. Chief Cusolito wants the residents of Falmouth to clearly understand that the Falmouth Police Department is not affiliated with the Police Protective Service and that neither the Falmouth Police Department nor any employees of the department are beneficiaries of this charity or organization.

According to the companies IRS form 990, (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax), filed for the tax year 2001, the Police Protective Fund collected \$2,880,162 in charitable donations from the public. The company reported that \$2,525,271 was paid to professional fund raisers. The company claims that \$189,113 was expended on "program services", however most of that went to compensation of company officers and directors, payroll taxes, accounting, legal, bank and licensing fees, miscellaneous office expenses etc. According to the companies tax return it appears that only \$20,573 in benefits (less than 1% of the donations solicited) were actually dispersed to recipients.

The Chief advises that should you be contacted by any fund raising organization, you should take the time to ensure that your donation will be used for its intended purpose. Take the time to learn more about the organization asking you for money.

- Know your charity (verify address, phone number, contact information, website) Never give to a charity you know nothing about.
- Examine your options. Never feel compelled to give to any charity. There are many charitable organizations responding to diverse needs and many of them are purporting to be supporting police officers and fire fighters, especially since September 11, 2001.
- Be wary of appeals that are long on emotion. The hard luck tale is a favorite ploy of a phony operator. A legitimate charity will tell you how it's using your money to address the specific need.

- Ask lots of questions. Ask the caller if he or she is a “paid fund raiser”? They are required to tell you. Ask how much of your money actually goes to the charity and how much is paid to the professional fund-raiser?
- You should know that professional fund raisers commonly take at least 70% of every dollar donated as their fee. That means that for every dollar you contribute, only about 30 cents actually reaches the cause you are supporting.
- Beware of professional fund-raisers who try to make their solicitations sound like they are coming directly from the charity itself or volunteers.
- Don't succumb to pressure. Take the time to decide. Many legitimate charitable needs are out there; make sure the organization collecting your money is legitimate.
- Do not pay by cash. Pay by check, and make it out to the charity (use its full name; don't use initials), not the fund-raiser. Never give your credit card number to a fund-raiser over the telephone. If the fund-raiser directly approaches you, ask to see identification. Better yet, mail your check directly to the charity of your choice.
- If you are contributing over the Internet, check to see if the site is secure and will offer protection for your credit card number.
- Always ask if the contribution is tax deductible.
- Find out what the charity intends to do with the excess contributions remaining after the specific needs of the fund raiser are met.

Individuals with inquiries or complaints about charitable solicitations, should call the Public Charities Division of the AG's office at (617) 727-2200 x 2101 or write to:

Division of Public Charities, Room 1413
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

For additional information on charitable giving, consult the Attorney General's website:
www.ago.state.ma.us/charity.asp