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FRAUD ALERT!

**Happy Holidays from the Office of Denver
District Attorney Mitch Morrissey**

IT'S NO SECRET – IT'S A SCAM!

Looking for a way to make a little extra cash? If so, you aren't alone. But please be careful to avoid employment scams.

Many companies hire consumers to patronize stores and restaurants as a way to evaluate how a business is performing. These "undercover consumers" are known as mystery shoppers or secret shoppers. It can be a legitimate "work from home" opportunity. There are also many scams that try to take advantage of consumers.

In most scams, a consumer receives an unsolicited recruitment ad offering them an opportunity to earn money as a secret shopper. The scams usually involve sending the "shopper" a large counterfeit check. They are instructed to cash the check, keep a couple hundred dollars as payment, then send the remaining money to a specific address via businesses like Money Gram or Western Union. Other scams steal the consumer's identity by getting them to pay a "one time sign up fee."

To avoid scams:

- Avoid companies that contact you unsolicited. Instead, seek out a reputable company.
- Check a company's reputation using Better Business Bureau 303-758-2100 or www.bbb.org.
- Scams will often promise outrageously high hourly fees, when in reality most secret shoppers are paid by the assignment.
- Never pay in advance to be a secret shopper. Scams may ask you to pay an upfront fee.

**Need help or have a question?
Call the Denver DA Fraud Line: 720-913-9179**

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