

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

**Steve Stern**

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR  
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT  
1842 E. Jericho Tpke. Suite P  
HUNTINGTON, NY 11743



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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CONTACT: **Deborah Harris**  
LEGISLATIVE AIDE  
OFFICE: 631-854-5100  
deborah.harris@suffolkcountyny.gov

### **LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN WARNS RESIDENTS ABOUT GIFT CARD TEXT SCAMS**

*“Winners” of Gift Cards targeted for Unsolicited Advertising and Identity Theft*

**HUNTINGTON, NY** – Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington, 16<sup>th</sup> L.D), is warning residents not to respond to text messages congratulating them for winning gift cards to retailers such as Target, Best Buy and Walmart. “Smishing” scammers send texts that direct recipients to authentic looking websites, where they are asked to enter personal information such as name, cellphone number, mailing address and other personal information. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) recently issued a warning on such scams, advising consumers that this information is used in identity theft operations and to target advertising. BBB recommends that if you receive such a text, you should not respond in any way, even to any link to remove your number from the distribution list. Any response validates the contact information for the scammer. You can forward any “smishing” texts to 7726 (SPAM) to alert your mobile carrier to block future texts from these numbers. “We have all received texts congratulating us for “winning” a gift card,” Legislator Stern said. “Legitimate retailers do not send out texts soliciting personal information. Scammers use very sophisticated looking websites to fool people into providing this information.” Visit [www.bbb.org/scam-stopper](http://www.bbb.org/scam-stopper) for more information about how to protect yourself from text and email scams.