Kimberly R. Snavely

From: Mississippi Secretary of State <mssos@service.govdelivery.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 12:01 PM

To: Kimberly R. Snavely

Subject: Lawsuit Filed Against Company Accused In Ongoing Business Scam



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Business Services Division

August 13, 2020 customerservice@sos.ms.gov

Lawsuit Filed Against Company Accused In Ongoing Business Scam

JACKSON – After investigating data and concerns brought forth by our office, the Mississippi Attorney General's Office (AG) has filed a lawsuit against Centurion Filing Services, LLC, for alleged deceptive solicitations targeting new Mississippi businesses. This action follows countless complaints to our <u>Business Services Division</u> and a cease-and-desist letter from the AG's Office, to which the company has not responded.

"This scam has affected more than 2,700 of our small businesses," said Secretary of State Michael Watson. "The COVID-19 pandemic continues to hinder our business community, and no Mississippian should face the additional nightmare of becoming a victim of fraud. I'm proud of my team for working diligently to gather the facts in this case, and I'm thankful for the Attorney General's partnership in bringing justice those who have been impacted."

Our office first received reports about Centurion Filing Services, LLC, in February. According to customers, the company, which operates under the fictitious name, MS Certificate Service, targets new businesses by sending a misleading "2020 Certificate of Existence Request Form" through the mail (see image below). The misleading document encourages business owners to pay a \$90.50 fee to receive a Mississippi Certificate of Existence. As of today, the scammers have profited between \$170,000 and \$260,000.

Mississippi businesses can receive a Certificate of Good Standing from our website, <u>sos.ms.gov</u>. Online processing costs \$25 and the certificate is available immediately after purchase.

Businesses may report deceptive or misleading solicitations such as these to our <u>Business Services Division</u> at (601) 359-1633, or the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-281-4418 or <u>consumer@ago.ms.gov</u>.

The solicitation below is NOT sent or authorized by our office.

Registered businesses in Mississippi do not have to respond or send payment to the third party, MS Certificate Service.

MS Certificate 665 S Pear Ord Ridgeland, MS	hard Road Suite 106-229	QUESTIONS?
V		PLEASE EMAIL:
-2020-	rec	cords@certificatefilingservice.com
		OR CALL TOLL FREE 1-866-301-2738
	•	
IMPORTANTI FOLLOW INSTRUCT	IONS EXACTLY WHEN COMPLET	ING THIS FORM. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.
Key Code: MS-39465-9205-23	Notice Date 2/13/2020	PLEASE RESPOND BY: 2/27/2020
Business Address:		7 1111111111
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