

# Community Information: Questionable Telemarketing Campaigns by Police Groups: How Not To Get *HUSTLED*

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Traditionally, December is a popular month for organizations and non-profits to solicit money because people are in a giving mood and facing the year-end deadline for charitable deductions. While most groups are legitimate, many are not. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office has received several complaints and some inquire about aggressive telephone solicitation tactics from groups using the words "deputy," "police," or "law enforcement," in an attempt to legitimize their fundraising effort. Donations to groups using these words may not always benefit their stated causes. In one instance a group called "Police Officers Alliance" collected \$300,000 to help police causes, but only a paltry \$500 actually benefited the officers. The rest was spent on things such as political contributions, lobbying activities, legal counsel, insurance, and representation before city, county or state officials. It is important to note that professional associations and labor unions are **not** charities. Using the words "Milwaukee County Sheriff" in their solicitation may mislead potential donors to assume that it has the support of the Sheriff's Administration. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office does not endorse any fundraising or solicitation by telephone.

Here is a checklist to prevent being misled when making contributions:

- Ask questions...Is the caller being paid or calling as a volunteer? How much of your donation will actually go to the local organization?
- Examine the size of the organization doing the soliciting.
- Ask about the composition of its governing board, its history and its affiliations.
- Ask for a written disclosure of how the group spends its money.
- **Never** give out credit card info over the phone.
- Ask them to send their donor pledge form on official stationary signed by the Sheriff.
- Call Milwaukee County Sheriff's Administration at 414-278-4647 if you have any doubts!