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Wisconsin Department of Revenue Warns Senior Homeowners About Viral Property Tax Scam

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) is warning homeowners about a viral online video promoting a nonexistent federal property tax relief program.

The video claims that Congress passed a law providing significant property tax relief for older homeowners, enabling seniors to freeze or reduce property taxes. Viewers are directed to contact their county assessor and request a "Senior Homeowner Tax Review Request" or "IRS Form 1098-SR." **DOR warns that no such federal program or form exists and the contact information provided to homeowners directs them to scammers, not their county assessors**.

"This is an AI-generated video designed to trick seniors into sharing Social Security numbers and banking details, or paying fees for nonexistent filing services," said Wisconsin Secretary of Revenue David Casey. "Property taxes are handled exclusively by local and state governments, not the federal government."

With the proliferation of artificial intelligence (A.I), scammers are increasingly using fake videos to spread misinformation. Sophisticated technology is used to generate videos that impersonate government officials, making them appear to say things they never actually said. These videos often include official-looking logos, the seals of real government agencies, and government terminology, making it difficult to differentiate between a real video and one that is fake.

The following practices will help prevent you from falling victim to scams:

- **Question and investigate videos before believing them.** Scammers use A.I. tools to create videos that copy the appearance and voices of real people. No matter how real or convincing a video appears, you must practice caution – especially with offers that seem too good to be true.
- **Do not share personal details.** Government tax and assessor offices will never ask for sensitive personal of financial information over the phone, via text or through unverified online links.
- **Verify locally.** If you have questions about legitimate property tax relief programs, contact your local municipality directly.

If you encounter a scam, report it directly to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) or the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Contact Wisconsin's Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 with questions or if you have lost money or control of your identity to a scam.