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CHECK A CHARITY: Do Your Research

The Problem: When you receive calls asking for charitable donations, often times the charity only receives a small percentage of your donation. Many charities and non-profits hire professional telemarketers, who take a portion of your donation as a fee. In some cases, the telemarketer can take up to 80% of your donation.

The Solution: When you receive a charitable solicitation phone call, you have the right to ask what percentage of your donation will go to the charity. If the caller refuses to answer, hang up! Legitimate charities will not dodge this question, and most consumer advocates suggest giving to charities that spend no more than 35% on telemarketer or other administrative fees.

In addition, the Attorney General's Check a Charity has information about hundreds of charities, including the portion of donations that are used for the charitable purpose, and what portion goes to fees. You can view the Check a Charity page at: <http://ago.mo.gov/civil-division/consumer/check-a-charity/>.

Tips when you receive a charitable solicitation phone call:

- Don't judge a charity by its name. False charities may use names that closely resemble legitimate charities.
- Don't be pressured. Give only when you are comfortable with the charity.
- Don't commit over the phone. Ask for written information.
- Avoid cash donations and make checks payable to the organization, not to an individual.

