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## AG Yost Reminds Parents How to Protect Children from Identity Theft

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — In an effort to curb identity theft of children, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost is advising parents to proactively place a freeze on their child's credit report.

Child identity theft occurs when someone fraudulently uses a child's identity to fraudulently open accounts or receive benefits. The imposter may be a family member, friend or a stranger and may use the child's name and Social Security number to open new accounts for cell phones, utilities, credit cards and even mortgages.

"A victim's age doesn't matter to identity thieves so parents need to utilize all the available tools to protect their children," Yost said. "A freeze on your children's credit report is free and can provide that security to lock out scammers."

Attorney General Yost is joined by other governments and nonprofit organizations this week in celebrating National Consumer Protection Week. The nationwide campaign encourages consumers to focus on their rights to better protect themselves.

The Federal Trade Commission found there were more than 14,000 victims of identity theft under the age of 19, according to its latest report.

Thieves could get away with using a child's identity for years because children typically do not try to check or access credit. As a result, child identity theft usually is not discovered until the child applies for college financial aid, a car loan or employment.

This video explains how a parent or guardian can ask the three major credit reporting agencies to create and freeze a credit record in the child's name. The freeze restricts the credit reporting agencies from releasing information about the child, making it more difficult for an imposter

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to use the child's personal information to be approved for credit, loans or services. To place a child security freeze, a parent should contact each of the credit reporting agencies - Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. The parent must provide proof of authority to act on behalf of the child, such as a birth certificate and proof of identity for both the child and the adult.

It is free to place or to lift a security freeze. Once in place, the freeze will remain in effect unless it is lifted by the parent or by the child after reaching the age of 16.

Victims of identity theft should contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office at 800-282-0515 or www.OhioProtects.org for assistance.

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