

**New York State Attorney General  
Eric T. Schneiderman**

Dear New Yorkers,  
Before you invest —  
**INVESTIGATE!**

That's the best advice anyone can give you on the steps you should take to keep your money safe—investigate the brokerage firm and the investment product itself.



My office can help. The Investor Protection Bureau protects the public from fraud by requiring brokers, dealers, securities salespersons and investment advisers to register with the Attorney General's Office. We are also empowered by the state Martin Act to investigate and prosecute allegations of investment fraud.

So, before you invest your hard earned money, check with us to be sure the product, salesperson and firm are registered. Remember, there are no guarantees in the investment world, and you are the one bearing the risk.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Schneiderman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Eric T. Schneiderman



**New York State Attorney General**  
The State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224  
1-800-771-7755  
[www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov)

**RESOURCES**

**New York State Attorney General's Office  
Investor Protection Bureau  
212-416-8222  
[www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov)**

- Registration status of brokers, dealers, securities salespersons and investment advisers
- Tips for becoming an informed investor
- Report suspected investment fraud

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**Financial Industry Regulatory Authority  
FINRA  
800-289-9999  
[brokercheck.finra.org](http://brokercheck.finra.org)**

Provides information about brokers' and advisers' employment and disciplinary history.

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**Securities and Exchange Commission  
SEC  
[investor.gov](http://investor.gov)  
[adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://adviserinfo.sec.gov)**

Provides information about investing and investment advisers.

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**North American Securities  
Administrators Assn.  
NASAA  
[nasaa.org](http://nasaa.org)**

Provides information about securities regulators in other states and jurisdictions.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL**



Before You Invest  
**INVESTIGATE**

**Investor Self-Defense Tips**



**Investor Protection  
Bureau**

## **Don't be a "courtesy victim."**

Con artists gladly take advantage of well-mannered people with fear they are being "rude" by hanging up or saying "no" to their sales pitches. Regard strangers, either on the phone or at your door, with caution. It is not impolite to simply say, "Sorry, not interested." It's better to maybe lose an opportunity, than to make a hasty commitment and lose everything.

## **Be wary of "You Must Act Now"**

Walk away from sales pitches that claim, "Tomorrow will be too late" or "You must act now." A salesperson who won't give you time to look into and consider the salesperson, firm, and investment opportunity itself, is probably trying to hide something. Our office can help you with information on firms and individuals in the securities and investment industries, including stockbrokers.

## **Ask for written information about the organization behind the investment plan.**

This includes the work history and background of the person handling your account, as well as information on the firm itself. Make sure your brokers, dealers, securities salespersons, and investment advisers are registered. Don't be afraid to ask questions: if the salesperson does not want to give you information, it is because they are hiding something.

## **Before making a commitment, get a professional opinion.**

Ask your attorney, stockbroker, accountant, or other reliable consultant about the investment first. Even discussing the opportunity with friends and family first can prove to be beneficial. Don't be afraid to discuss it with others before making the investment.

## **Make sure you clearly understand and receive a written copy of the investment.**

Don't put your money into an investment you don't understand, and beware of an adviser who promises to "take care of everything for you." Demand a copy of the complete information including the risks, obligations, and any costs associated with the investment, including full and complete information about commissions, sales charges, maintenance or service charges, transaction or redemption fees, and any penalties associated with the investment. At the very least, a financial planner should provide you with:

- A clearly written individualized financial plan;
- A discussion of the amount of risk you are willing to assume;
- A detailed explanation of the assumptions underlying the plan;
- A specific schedule for monitoring your financial plan;
- Any additional advice and investment choices available to you.

## **Don't be embarrassed to ask questions or too proud to report investment fraud or abuse.**

Con artists prey on your fears and rely on them in order to con you out of your financial freedom. If you feel any doubt about an investment, or feel that you have been a victim of investment fraud, report such fears immediately. These con artists will stop at nothing until they take everything you have.

## **Before you invest -- INVESTIGATE!**

Look into the backgrounds of potential brokers and advisers prior to entering into financial relationships with them. Many agencies will provide you with the necessary information to help you invest wisely.

