

## Take **AIM** before investing:



- A** Always ask questions.
- I** Investigate before you invest.
- M** Make the best decision for you and your family.

### **HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?**

#### **Securities Compliance Branch:**

Verifies licensing status of broker-dealers & Investment Advisors. Handles registration of securities (i.e. mutual funds, franchise, etc.)  
**(808) 586-2722**

#### **Securities Enforcement Branch:**

Answers inquiries from the public regarding investment abuses & frauds. Receives and investigates complaints of violations of Hawaii Securities laws.  
**(808) 586-2740**

#### **Securities Education Program:**

Offers "free" educational presentations and materials to schools, community groups & events, senior centers, military, working adults, etc.  
**(808) 587-7400**

For more information contact:

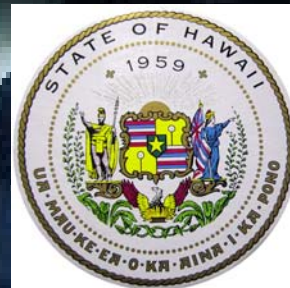
**CALL TO REPORT FRAUD  
(808) 587-2267  
or 58SCAMS**

**Toll Free 1-877-447-2267  
or 1-877-HI SCAMS**

**Visit our website at:  
[www.investing.hawaii.gov](http://www.investing.hawaii.gov)**



**Thank you to the Secretary of the Commonwealth Securities Division Boston, Massachusetts for the source materials.**



**Department of  
Commerce  
and Consumer  
Affairs**

**Office of the  
Securities  
Commissioner**

***"Protecting Hawaii Investors"***

# We are here for YOU...

The **Hawaii Office of the Securities Commissioner** has become aware of growing threats to the financial health of our military personnel and their families. This brochure has been designed to help protect our service men and women from becoming victims of financial scams.

In many cases, criminals offering scams have targeted service members in an attempt to rake their hard-earned dollars. Service members have been lured by cash-advance loans that provide quick cash, but usually bear very high annual interest rates if they are not paid on time. Other scams may involve insurance, mutual funds, annuities, certificates of deposits, or military affinity fraud.

These scams often create financial difficulties, including credit problems, as well as a negative impact on troop morale and readiness. *The goal of the Hawaii Office of the Securities Commissioner is to educate the men and women in uniform by helping them make informed financial decisions.*



## 10 Preventive Tips

These tips could protect you and your family from losing your savings and retirement:

**1** Always research financial products before investing. Contact the Hawaii Office of Securities to check background information on financial companies and agents and to identify potential scams.

**2** Be wary of any "guaranteed" returns on your investment. Risk is inherent to investing, so be cautious if someone promises you a high rate of return.

**3** Don't be talked into investing immediately. Most scams rely on quick decisions that are not thought out by the investor. Con artists often talk investors into making decisions right away, so be sure to take the time you need to research the investment, its promoters and risks involved.

**4** Ask questions. For example, if an agent is trying to sell you an annuity, ask how much commission he or she will receive from the sale. If the agent avoids the question, be skeptical of this investment.

**5** Only invest what you can afford to lose. Don't invest your entire life savings at once. Know the risks involved with any investment you are considering, and consult a financial professional for additional guidance before making a commitment.

**6** Don't feel guilty about saying "NO". Con artists take advantage of people who feel rude if they hang up the phone or say no to sales pitches. Use caution if you are contacted by a stranger. Feel free to tell the salesperson that you are not interested or need more time to investigate the investment.

**7** Be aware of risks. Know the risks involved with any investment you are considering, and consult a financial professional for additional guidance before making a commitment.

**8** You should control your own money. Before you invest, get a written copy of the investment with the complete terms and conditions, including the risks, service charges, and any penalty fees involved. Beware if someone promises to "take care of everything for you."

**9** Don't be vulnerable to these marketing tactics. Some companies use military-sounding names and hire former officers as salespeople to earn trust and lure military personnel into investment and lending scams.

**10** Report investment fraud. If you think you may be a victim of investment fraud. **Call toll-free 1-877- HI SCAMS (1-877-447-2267) for help.** Protect yourself, your family and other citizens from becoming future victims of fraud.