A Message to Boston’s College and University Students from Boston Police Commissioner William Evans

Please be aware of the following that has been posted on BPDNews.com and BPD social media sites:

**BPD Community Alert: After Recent Incidents, BPD Warns Student Community of Ongoing Phone Extortion Scam**

The Boston Police Department is advising Boston area college and university students and their families to be aware of an ongoing phone extortion scam. The BPD and outside agencies have taken several reports from relatives of area students who appear to have been targeted by this scam.

In most cases, an unknown person(s) has called the parent, grandparent, or relative of a Boston area college/university student and stated the student has been arrested and needs bail money. The caller then instructs the relative to send money via FedEx to a particular Boston address.

It is not uncommon for the caller to know basic details about the victim’s life, including names of family members, places of employment, and school information. It is possible that this information is gathered through internet searches or websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In some cases, the caller phones several members of the same family, extracting information from one person that is then leveraged against a relative to increase the credibility of the caller’s claims.

The Boston Police Department is advising Boston area college/university students to contact their family members immediately to inform them that they are safe, that calls of this nature are a scam, and not to send money to unknown recipients for bail. Relatives of students that receive a call similar to the above scheme are advised to:

- **Attempt to contact the person that has allegedly been arrested and confirm their well-being.**
- **Ask the caller for specific information about where the family member may be held.**
- **Have the caller physically describe the family member to see if the caller can provide some level of detail that could help confirm or dispel the claim.**
- **Note the phone number where the call or text originated and report the incident to your local police department or the Boston Police Department immediately.**

In addition to filing a report with the Boston Police Department, victims are encouraged to report any Phone or Internet Fraud Scams to the Federal Trade Commission.

Call the FTC at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or TTY 1-866-653-4261.

Go online: [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint).

Sincerely,

William B. Evans
Police Commissioner