

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Feb. 26-March 3 is a Week Designated to Encouraging Savings for All Americans**

*Ohio Division of Securities Supports America Saves Week, Military Saves Week;  
Ohioans Urged to “Investigate Before You Invest” to Help Prevent Financial Fraud*

The Ohio Division of Securities is partnering with the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) to urge Ohio investors to “investigate before you invest” to help prevent investment fraud as part of the America Saves Week campaign.

The week of Feb. 26 through March 3 is dedicated to both America Saves Week and Military Saves Week, two nationwide campaigns coordinated by the Consumer Federation of America.

“One of our goals is to build awareness among investors about safe financial behavior to help prevent fraud,” said Ohio Securities Commissioner Andrea Seidt. “Information is the best defense against Ohioans losing their hard-earned savings to scammers, and our role as the state’s securities regulator is to help investors research investment advisers, stockbrokers and investment products before they invest their money.”

To help investors discuss their finances and safe-investing habits with their family members, a series of “Conversation Starters” developed by NASAA are [available on NASAA’s website](#).

Each Conversation Starter includes questions designed to help families kick-start an ongoing dialogue about budgeting, saving, investing and avoiding investment fraud. The series includes sets of questions for couples just starting out, families, working adults and employers, retirees and seniors, military families, and for difficult times in life.

### **Kiplinger’s *Financial Field Manual* for U.S. Armed Forces Members Available from the Division of Securities for Military Saves Week**

A revised ***Kiplinger’s Financial Field Manual: A Personal Finance Guide For Military Families*** helps military members and their families make the most of the special financial benefits open to them, including tax breaks, low-cost investments, legal protections, education opportunities and insurance programs. The guide also includes a special section about the new military retirement plan that could affect their financial future.

Ohio residents who joined the U.S. armed forces beginning in 2006 through the end of 2017 need to decide whether to stay with the retirement system that’s been in place for decades or choose a new, blended plan that includes both a pension and contributions to the government’s Thrift Savings Plan. They will have from Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, to decide which plan to choose. Those who enlist in 2018 and later years will automatically go into the blended system.

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The guide is provided at no charge by the Ohio Division of Securities, the Investor Protection Trust (IPT) and the Investor Protection Institute (IPI). The guide is [available on the Division's website](#), and an [overview of the retirement plan changes can be found on the Kiplinger.com website](#).

"Members of the military sometimes find themselves targeted by unscrupulous swindlers who prey on active and retired military personnel," said Seidt. "This valuable resource recognizes that members of the military and their families in Ohio and elsewhere face unique challenges and risks when it comes to protecting their investments, avoiding fraudulent pitches, and planning for retirement. The step-by-step guide gives great advice on what military families should do and what they should avoid."

Commissioner Seidt provided the following tips for all potential investors to help avoid becoming a victim of fraud:

- Avoid blind reliance on testimonials from family and friends regarding a particular securities salesperson or investment.
- Take the time to understand what you are purchasing. Read the relevant prospectus or offering circular and, if needed, consult a licensed investment adviser.
- Be skeptical when promised unusually high or unrealistic returns, especially when other investments or financial products are not generating similar returns.
- Keep notes on conversations relating to your investment accounts. Carefully review all monthly or quarterly account statements, as well as online account information.

Seidt said investors should ask these questions before investing with a financial adviser:

- Are you licensed to do business in Ohio?
- Is the investment that you are recommending properly registered with the Division of Securities?
- Is your regulatory record free of discipline and sanctions by employers and regulators for misconduct?

"If the answer is 'no' to these questions, that's a warning to inquire further," she said. "Don't just take the word of a salesperson. Check out the person and the investment by calling our Investor Protection Hotline at 877-683-7841."

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**About America Saves Week / Military Saves Week:** America Saves Week promotes the importance of personal savings, and provides financial education and guidance for Americans to save more so they can pay down debt, build an emergency fund, and save for a home, education or retirement. Military Saves Week seeks to motivate, support, and encourage military families to save money, reduce debt and build wealth. Both campaigns are coordinated by the Consumer Federation of America. More information is available at [americasavesweek.org](http://americasavesweek.org) and [militarysaves.org](http://militarysaves.org).

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