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# **JOHN M. SCHRODER**

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LOUISIANA STATE TREASURER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **State Treasurer John Schroder Will Not Transfer Unclaimed Property Money to General Fund**

BATON ROUGE, LA – State Treasurer John Schroder has notified the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) that he is ending the practice of transferring Unclaimed Property money to the State General Fund at the end of each fiscal year.

“It infuriates me that big government takes it upon itself to decide what does and doesn’t belong to Louisiana citizens,” said Treasurer Schroder. “Clearly this money belongs to the rightful owners, and it’s my job to return it.”

The Treasury collects around \$86 million in Unclaimed Property money from lost wages, insurance proceeds and utility deposits each year. Before Treasurer Schroder took office, the Unclaimed Property Division annually returned around \$34 million to Louisiana citizens. For decades, any leftover Unclaimed Property funds that citizens hadn’t claimed were transferred to the State General Fund for state government to spend.

Enhanced technology and process improvements in the Unclaimed Property Program have led to an increase in the amount of money returned this past year. The number of Unclaimed Property checks issued in FY 19 skyrocketed from an average of 31,000 in prior years to 208,000. The total amount of money returned this past year was \$52.2 million—the most amount of money ever given back in the history of the program.

“The last time a transfer of Unclaimed Property money was made at the end of Fiscal Year 2018, we did not have enough on hand and had to wait to pay claims,” said Treasurer Schroder. “Even if we’ve always had enough money to pay claims in the past, with continued enhancements to the program that may

not always be the case. We owe it to you to protect your money until you come to claim it.”

Unclaimed Property money was never the state’s to begin with. RS 9:162(B) reads “the state assumes custody and responsibility for the safekeeping of the property” which places the responsibility with the treasurer for the safekeeping of the money.

“I am willing to go to court to protect this money,” said Treasurer Schroder. “Even if you could somehow prove the law allows for the money to be spent by government, the practice should be stopped. Let’s for once use a little common sense.”

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