REMARKS — PRESS CONFERENCE
MARCH 6, 2018

NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK
Claire Rosenzweig, President and CEO, Better Business Bureau Serving Metro New York

Good Morning. I am Claire Rosenzweig, President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau Serving Metro New York. Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate National Consumer Protection Week and announce BBB Metro NY’s Top Ten Consumer Complaint Categories.

We wish to thank the IRS for hosting this event, and we are grateful to our colleagues who are here today representing organizations that focus on consumer protection.

BBB Metro NY is part of a federated system of more than 100 independent BBBs across North America. We help people find businesses and charities they can trust. In 2017, people turned to BBB more than 160 million times for BBB Business Profile Reports on more than 5.2 million businesses, all available for free at bbb.org.

In Metro New York alone, consumers turned to BBB more than 5.7 million times in 2017. We handled over 42,900 complaints from consumers about businesses, in addition to receiving over 31,000 Customer Reviews, a 49 percent increase from 2016.

When consumers want to investigate a business, BBB offers three venues of information. They can check a Business’s Complaint history. These generally involve customer complaints against a business relating to transactions. They can also read
Customer Reviews which differ from Complaints in that they may be positive or negative and might not involve a transaction.

And, they can check BBB’s Scam Tracker℠ tool. Throughout North America, BBBs have received more than 100,000 scam reports to this site – a milestone that was reached just the other day. With Scam Tracker, you can report potential scams and see scams that others have reported in your community and nationally.

And now, BBB Metro New York’s Top Ten Complaint Categories for 2017:
The number one complaint category, for the ninth consecutive year, was Financial Services. Typically, these complaints involve non-delivery of a product or service, credit and billing issues, advertising issues, failure to provide promised adjustments, selling practices, and issues with mortgages or insurance policies.

Number two was Telecommunications. These complaints generally involve credit and billing issues, advertising issues, problems with selling practices, and failure to provide promised adjustments.

Health & Beauty complaints were the third most reported type in 2017, a move up from number four the prior year. This category includes complaints against gyms, spas, as well as websites selling skin care and beauty products. This also includes reports about “negative option” complaints in which consumers thought they were purchasing trial samples, only to find out later that they were enrolled in monthly subscriptions, often for sizeable sums of money.

The other top complaint categories are:

4. Online Retailers
5. Automotive
6. Department Stores and Apparel
7. Consumer Technology
8. Home Improvement & Construction
9. Travel
10. Professional and Business Services

Your press kit has an explanation of the complaint categories.

The Top Scams reported in 2017 to BBB’s Scam Tracker as they relate to New York are:

1. Phishing
2. Online Purchases
3. Tax Collection
4. Tech Support
5. Employment
6. Debt Collections
7. Government Grants
8. Credit Repair/Debt Relief
9. Sweepstakes/Lottery/Prizes
10. Travel/Vacations

For more information about the top complaints and scams of 2017, we urge you to visit go.bbb.org/ny-topten

On behalf of the BBB, I thank you for being here to share our findings and our stories.