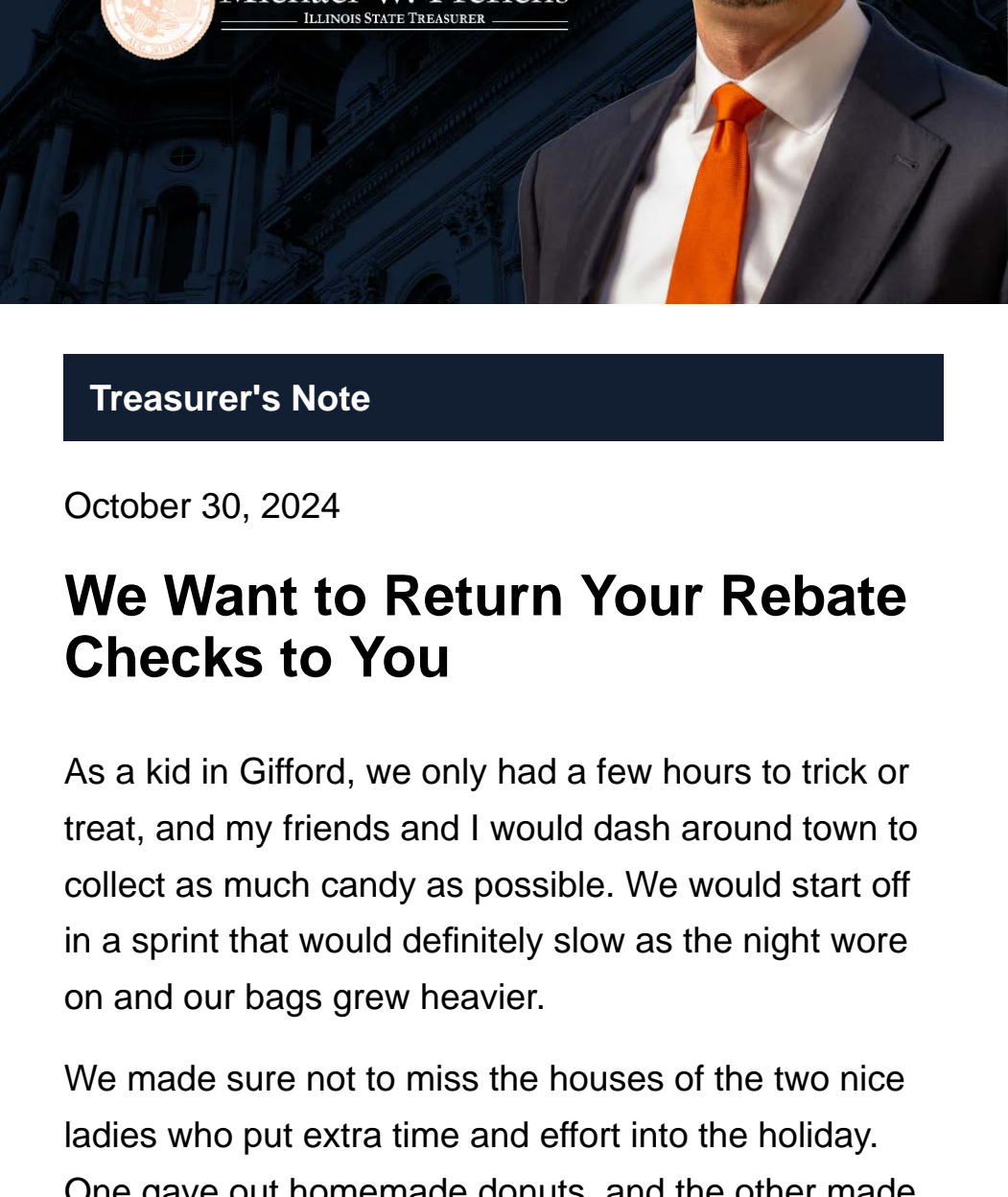


Halloween isn't the only time you have to watch out for sneaky tricks.

[View online version](#)



### Treasurer's Note

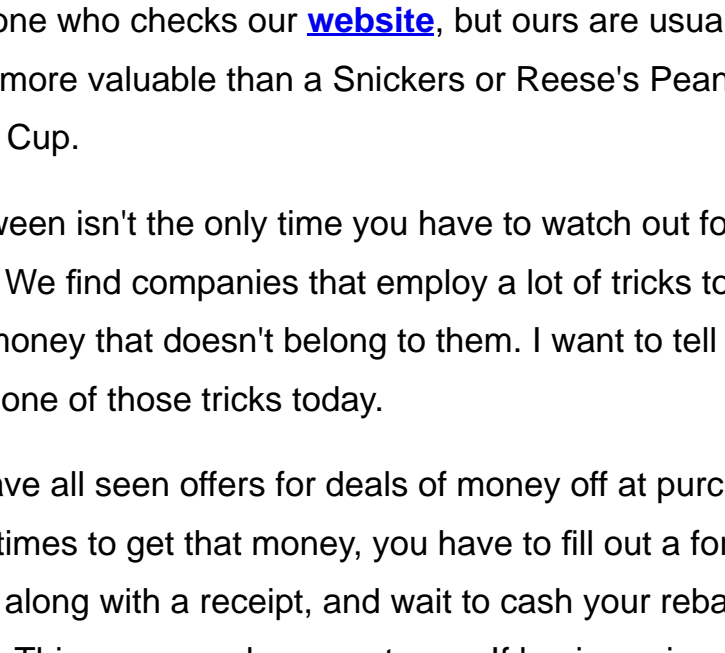
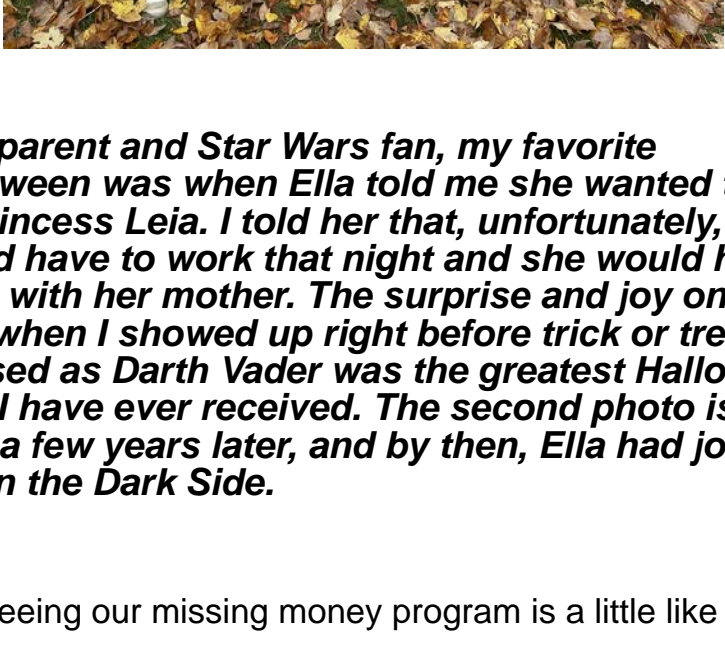
October 30, 2024

## We Want to Return Your Rebate Checks to You

As a kid in Gifford, we only had a few hours to trick or treat, and my friends and I would dash around town to collect as much candy as possible. We would start off in a sprint that would definitely slow as the night wore on and our bags grew heavier.

We made sure not to miss the houses of the two nice ladies who put extra time and effort into the holiday. One gave out homemade donuts, and the other made popcorn balls. Though neither were prepackaged, I grew up in a small town where we knew most of our neighbors. I never worried about anyone playing any tricks on me.

When my daughter got to be too old to go door to door with her dad, I switched to staying at home and giving out candy. Now, a perfect night is when there is just enough candy for all of the kids, but the last trick-or-treater at my door takes the last piece. I don't need temptations lying around the house for weeks afterward.



*As a parent and Star Wars fan, my favorite Halloween was when Ella told me she wanted to go as Princess Leia. I told her that, unfortunately, I would have to work that night and she would have to go with her mother. The surprise and joy on her face when I showed up right before trick or treating dressed as Darth Vader was the greatest Halloween treat I have ever received. The second photo is from a few years later, and by then, Ella had joined me on the Dark Side.*

Overseeing our missing money program is a little like Halloween, but 365 days a year. We don't have treats for everyone who checks our [website](#), but ours are usually much more valuable than a Snickers or Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.

Halloween isn't the only time you have to watch out for tricks. We find companies that employ a lot of tricks to hold onto money that doesn't belong to them. I want to tell you about one of those tricks today.

We have all seen offers for deals of money off at purchase. Sometimes to get that money, you have to fill out a form, mail it along with a receipt, and wait to cash your rebate check. This never made sense to me. If business is supposed to be efficient, then wouldn't it be more efficient to just give me my discount at the register and not have to deal with all of this paperwork?

The first trick is that they will stuff your receipt along with the claim form into the bag with your shiny new item. They know that many people won't submit for their rebate when they get home because they will be too busy playing with their new phone or getting caught up in life's demands. If you got distracted and never mailed your claim, I can't help you get your money.

The second trick is that often the rebate forms are really small, and when someone with the company receives the completed form that small 3 you wrote might be transcribed as an 8. Or the 7 might become a 1, and then your check is mailed to the wrong address. We might be able to help you get your money in that case.

The third and sneakiest trick is that the company might outsource the rebate check processing to a third party. You fill out forms legibly, mail them back, and then wait for your check. You look for weeks for an envelope from that store and eventually forget about it or give up hope.

The check probably arrived, but it came from the generically named company they outsourced the processing to. When you saw a piece of mail from ABC World Corp. or 123 Express Services, you likely assumed it was junk mail and threw it away without opening and never even saw your check.

It doesn't make financial sense to hire a lawyer to get your money, and often the amount is small enough that you think it is not worth your time to follow up with the store. But as Illinois Treasurer, I get to fight on behalf of ALL the consumers of the state to get the money that is owed to them.

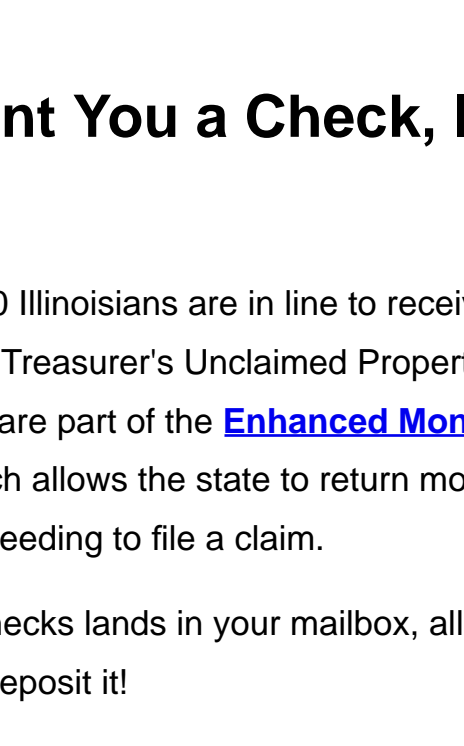
We have won lawsuits for millions of dollars for Illinois customers. So even though you may keep track of the money you have received, maybe there is money for you out there that you never saw. You can check at our [website](#).

This Halloween, I will be giving out candy to kids in my neighborhood, but I would really like to return more money to people throughout our state. If you check my [website](#), I can't promise you that you will find a treat, but I can promise you that there will be no tricks.

Sincerely,

**Michael W. Frerichs**

Illinois State Treasurer



## Illinois' Bright Start 529 Plan Earns 6th Gold Rating

Illinois' Bright Start 529 College Savings Plan continues to win recognition as one of the best in the nation. Yesterday, Bright Start earned its sixth Gold rating from Morningstar.

"Being recognized as a strong advocate for Illinois families is an honor," said Treasurer Michael Frerichs, who serves as the Trustee and Administrator of Bright Start 529 College Savings. "Every day we work diligently to keep fees low, provide a high-quality range of investment options, and ensure a family's hard-earned savings goes toward the cost of college or vocational school."

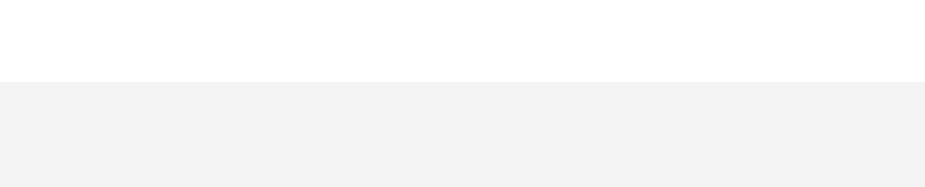
Bright Start is one of just five Gold-rated 529 plans in the country. The [Morningstar](#) review described Bright Start as a standout plan offering "exceptional state stewardship of investor capital and well-constructed portfolios managed by competent investment teams." Morningstar also applauded the Treasurer's Office for its strong oversight of Bright Start.

This marks the sixth time that Bright Start has won Gold since Frerichs revamped the plan in 2017.

Morningstar recognized Illinois as a strong advocate for college savers, and for effectively acquiring the features families need, as evidenced by its new investment manager. Earlier this year, [Frerichs lowered fees with TIAA for the Bright Start Plan and implemented investment and technology enhancements.](#)

Bright Start is a 529 College Savings plan that can be used at eligible educational institutions, including public and private schools; two-year and four-year colleges and universities; technical and vocational schools; and registered apprenticeship programs. The investment grows tax-free when spent on qualified expenses.

You can read important disclosures, including information about investments, fees, and risks related to Bright Start [here](#).



## If We Sent You a Check, It's for Real

Nearly 140,000 Illinoisians are in line to receive a check from the State Treasurer's Unclaimed Property program. These checks are part of the [Enhanced Money Match program](#), which allows the state to return money to people without them needing to file a claim.

If one of the checks lands in your mailbox, all you have to do is cash or deposit it!

On October 22, Treasurer Frerichs hosted a press conference with State Senator [Sara Feigenholtz](#) and Illinois State Representative [Stephanie Kifowit](#) to spread the word about Enhanced Money Match. Watch our video recap of the news coverage!



## Honoring Leaders during LGBTQ+ History Month

As October draws to a close, we're marking the end of [LGBTQ+ History Month](#) with a video from the Illinois State Treasurer's Office celebration ceremony. Treasurer Frerichs' office honored the contributions of eight individuals and one organization whose dedication and leadership have pushed Illinois forward. These individuals include a conservation and advocacy director, LGBTQ community pioneers, a medical professor, a state senator, an HIV advocacy organization president, an arts center leader, a women's career fitness platform founder, and a rugby team.

Watch some of their remarks in the video above!

### Follow us on Social Media!



**Illinois State Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs**

1 East Old State Capitol Plaza

Springfield, IL 62701

[WWW.ILLINOISTREASURER.GOV](http://WWW.ILLINOISTREASURER.GOV)

[CONTACT PAGE](#)

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