



*Brought to you by Kevin Lathrop*

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

# Financial Beacon

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Estate planning basics:  
Helpful links and resources

College students  
and ID theft

What your kids need to know

**Letter from  
your agent**

Poll shows  
ethical divide  
between work  
and personal life



## A MESSAGE from your agent

### **Dear Brother Knight:**

In a poll commissioned by the K of C, 74 percent of Americans believe that people should have the same ethical standards in business as in their personal lives, but 72 percent say that people fail to do that.

The poll was conducted by Marist College early in 2009. In addition to the random sample of Americans, the poll questions were answered by a separate group of executives. By the way, 86 percent of the executives said that people should have the same ethical standards at work and in their personal lives; 56 percent said that people fail in that regard.

The finance/investment industry as a whole earned an A/B grade for honesty and ethical conduct from only 20 percent of Americans, and a D/F from 53 percent (and 66 percent of executives).

Another interesting result: 63 percent of Americans and 70 percent of executives say that religious beliefs should significantly influence executives' business decisions.

This doesn't surprise Knights of Columbus agents. As a Catholic fraternal organization, our Order strives to live and work by a single moral compass. I believe that's why we maintain the top possible ratings for strength and stability in our industry. More importantly, it's the reason we'll continue to be here to honor our promises to you.

Fraternally yours,

**Kevin Lathrop**

## What your college students need to know about ID theft

Do you know a college student who is SO not worried about identity theft? The reasoning probably goes something like this: "I've got, like, \$14.27 in my checking account. What's the worst that can happen?"

The fact is, the college lifestyle is uniquely exposed to identity theft. And it's not just bank account funds the thieves are after, it's personal information they can use to get credit cards and loans.

When that happens, even if the lender or card issuer forgives the balances racked up by thieves, the victim's credit rating can be badly damaged. Keep in mind that in addition to lenders, many employers, landlords, and insurance companies also review credit ratings.

Here are four common identity theft risks for college students, and how to protect against them:

### **1 Living on campus with roommates and sharing stuff**

Lending someone a jacket or a DVD? Fine. Lending someone a phone that's in your name, your laptop, or a credit or debit card? Never. Set up password protection on your computer, use a strong password (don't use words found in a standard dictionary, and include at least one capital letter and one number or symbol), and never leave it unattended in a coffee shop or library.

### **2 Buying online**

Don't take for granted that any online seller with professional-looking e-commerce features is legit. Before entering any personal or financial information, check the Web address for the added "s" (for "secure") after "http," and for the padlock-shaped icon in the corner. Do a Google search on unfamiliar businesses or product names (try including the word "fraud" in the search). Don't follow links embedded



The college lifestyle is uniquely exposed to identity theft.

in e-mails; type the address into the browser's address box yourself. Also, don't make purchases from public computers. Even using your own computer in a free "hotspot" is risky.

### **3 Throwing away all those credit offers without shredding them first**

Pre-approved credit card offers arrive in the mail daily for many college students, often including information drawn from the student's credit report. Thieves can activate these accounts, so shred every one of these letters. Also, consider using a permanent home address or post office box rather than a temporary dorm or apartment address, to keep sensitive mail out of the campus mail system.

### **4 Keeping personal documents in unsecured places**

When your personal space isn't secure, as in most dorms and campus apartments, lock up sensitive documents such as college registration and loan documents, bank and credit statements, and anything that includes your Social Security number, PIN numbers, date and county of birth, or drivers license number. ♦

## PART THREE: Links and resources

Estate planning isn't simply a matter for wealthy people to consider. If you have assets and a family, plain and simple, you need to look into how your assets will be handled when the time comes. The good news is, you don't have to do it alone.

The *Financial Beacon's* three-part series on estate planning wraps up with the following list of contacts and resources for estate planning and related topics, such as end-of-life issues. I also encourage you to consider me a resource for these important issues.

### General estate planning

- At [usa.gov](http://usa.gov), enter "estate planning" in the search box for a listing of resources from various state agencies and universities. One particularly good entry is "Do I need estate planning?" from the California Bar Association.
- CNNMoney's basic guide to estate planning: [money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/money101/lesson21/](http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/money101/lesson21/)
- A series of articles about estate planning at Smartmoney.com: [smartmoney.com/estate/](http://smartmoney.com/estate/)

### For veterans

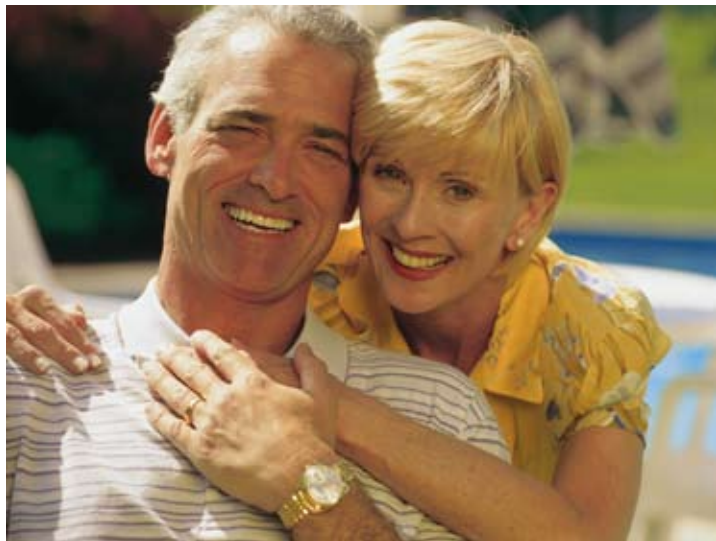
- Veterans of the U.S. armed forces can learn more about benefits, including

those relating to estate planning, at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Web site: [va.gov](http://va.gov) (click on the "Benefits" tab in the menu on the upper left of the home page). You may also call for assistance: 800-827-1000.

### Living wills and other end-of-life issues

- Caring Connections, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, provides comprehensive information about advance health care directives (such as living wills and medical powers of attorney) and similar issues: [caringinfo.org/AdvanceDirectives](http://caringinfo.org/AdvanceDirectives)

Again, you don't have to be wealthy to require estate planning. You also don't have to be of retirement age. In fact, estate planning shouldn't be a one-time event. As your life circumstances change—your family situation, your job, your health—you'll need to re-examine your plan. Involve the people close to you.



As difficult as it can be, couples and families should discuss who will have authority to make decisions for you should the need arise, and end-of-life issues.

As your professional Knights of Columbus agent, I'm always glad to help if you need more information to assist you with these discussions, or if you want to know more about building and protecting your nest egg. ♦

*The resources listed in this article are intended as general information only, and should not be construed as legal advice. Laws and terms may vary among states, so always consult a qualified legal expert on the matters described in this article.*

## YOUR AGENT



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*Contact me today for information on long-term care insurance*

### Family benefits & services

Knights of Columbus insurance consistently ranks at the top of the industry in financial stability and ethics. Please call to discuss these services:

- Financial needs analysis
- Life insurance
- Tax deferred fixed-rate annuities
- Long-term care insurance
- Retirement account rollovers
- Estate preservation
- Scholarships
- Family fraternal benefits



## The Income Protection Rider: A steady income stream gives survivors balance

Managing the lump-sum payout from a permanent life insurance policy can be challenging, especially in the aftermath of a loved one's death. The Income Protection Rider (IPR), available with qualified permanent life insurance policies from the Knights of Columbus, provides a steady stream of income in addition to the lump-sum payment.

IPRs generate set monthly payments to the policy's beneficiary for a set amount of time. They are an affordable alternative to buying an additional policy, and you can customize the payment amount and length of the payout to your family's needs.

Please get in touch with me to talk about a Knights of Columbus life insurance policy with an IPR, or anything else involving your family's financial security.