

# THE STATE CENTER CONSUMER PROTECTION REPORT

September 2017

## About the State Center Consumer Protection Report

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*The Center for State Enforcement of Antitrust and Consumer Protection Laws* ("State Center") is pleased to present the latest edition of the State Center Consumer Protection Report ("Consumer Protection Report") Published in partnership with [StateAG.org](http://StateAG.org), the Consumer Protection Report is a monthly compilation of state attorney general press releases on local and national consumer protection efforts, including investigations, court cases, consumer alerts and advocacy initiatives. It makes no effort to prioritize, analyze or comment on the information presented in the press releases and their potential impact on consumers.

The Consumer Protection Report relies solely and exclusively on state attorney general press releases, and thus is not an exhaustive representation of state attorney general consumer protection activity.

The Consumer Protection Report is produced through the State Center's State AG Consumer Protection Initiative: a website featuring all current and previous editions of the Report, and a [database](#), allowing visitors to conduct key-word and drop-down menu searches of all previous editions.

- *For more information on the State AG Consumer Protection Initiative, please visit our website: [www.statecenterinc.org/cpi-newsletter](http://www.statecenterinc.org/cpi-newsletter).*
- *If an office would like their consumer protection activity included in subsequent newsletters, please contact us.*
- **Newsletter sign up:** *To sign up for the monthly Consumer Protection Report, please sign up [here](#).*



**For more information about the State Center and StateAG.org, please visit our websites:**

State Center: <http://www.statecenterinc.org>

StateAG.org: [www.stateag.org](http://www.stateag.org)

## Table of Contents

Consumer Protection Cases.....	5
ALABAMA.....	5
ARIZONA.....	5
CALIFORNIA.....	6
COLORADO.....	7
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.....	7
IDAHO.....	8
ILLINOIS.....	9
IOWA.....	9
KANSAS.....	10
MARYLAND.....	11
MASSACHUSETTS.....	12
MICHIGAN.....	14
MINNESOTA.....	15
MISSISSIPPI.....	15
MONTANA.....	17
NEVADA.....	18
NEW HAMPSHIRE.....	18
NEW JERSEY.....	19
NEW MEXICO.....	20
NEW YORK.....	20
PENNSYLVANIA.....	24
TEXAS.....	25
VERMONT.....	26
VIRGINIA.....	27
WASHINGTON.....	30
WEST VIRGINIA.....	31
Multistate Cases.....	32
Investigation into the Nationwide Opioid Epidemic.....	32
Bipartisan investigation into the massive Equifax data breach.....	32
Settlement with Lenovo over Adware.....	33
Legal Action to Protect Fuel Efficiency Standards.....	34

Medicaid Fraud .....	36
ARKANSAS .....	36
CONNECTICUT .....	37
FLORIDA .....	38
IDAHO.....	39
INDIANA .....	40
IOWA.....	40
KANSAS.....	41
KENTUCKY .....	42
LOUISIANA.....	43
MISSOURI .....	44
VERMONT.....	44
Consumer Advocacy.....	45
Hurricane & Natural Disaster Fraud and Scam Alerts.....	45
Advocacy related to Equifax Data Breach.....	46
Protections for Student Borrowers.....	49
CALIFORNIA.....	50
DELAWARE .....	50
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.....	51
MAINE .....	52
MISSISSIPPI.....	52
NEW MEXICO .....	53
NEW YORK.....	54
OHIO.....	55
OKLAHOMA.....	56
RHODE ISLAND .....	56

## Consumer Protection Cases

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### ALABAMA

September 12, 2017

#### **FLORIDA WOMAN FOUND GUILTY IN GAS STATION DEBIT CARD SKIMMING OPERATION THAT INVOLVED MULTIPLE STATES**

Montgomery, Alabama- Eunises Llorca-Menses (30), of Naples, Florida, was found guilty by a federal jury Friday for her part in a scheme to use skimming devices on gas pumps to steal credit and debit card numbers, announced A. Clark Morris, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, and Steven T. Marshall, Attorney General for the State of Alabama. The guilty verdict follows a multi-agency investigation that was initiated by the Ozark Police Department, the Alabama Attorney General's Office, the United States Secret Service, and the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office.

On February 15, 2017, Llorca Menses and her co-defendant Reiner Perez-Rives (34), of Houston, Texas, were charged by a federal grand jury with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Perez-Rives pled guilty in July to conspiracy and identity theft charges.

As part of the scheme, Llorca-Menses and Perez-Rives, would rent vehicles and travel between Florida, Alabama,...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1130>

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### ARIZONA

September 08, 2017

#### **AG Brnovich Files Lawsuit Against Arizona Board of Regents for Unconstitutional Tuition Hikes**

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich today filed a lawsuit against the Arizona Board of Regents (“ABOR”) for dramatically and unconstitutionally increasing the price of base tuition and mandatory fees at Arizona's public universities by more than 300 percent since 2003. The Arizona Constitution requires that “the university and all other state educational institutions shall be open to students of both sexes, and the instruction furnished shall be as nearly free as possible.”

“Every Arizonan dreams of being able to send their kids to college,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Within the last 15 years, Arizona went from having some of the most affordable public universities to having some of the most expensive. We believe the Board of Regents needs to be held accountable and answer tough questions for Arizona’s skyrocketing tuition rates.”

The State alleges that ABOR has adopted unconstitutional tuition-setting policies, has

abandoned its duty to serve as a check...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/ag-brnovich-files-lawsuit-against-arizona-board-regents-unconstitutional-tuition-hikes>

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## CALIFORNIA

September 15, 2017

### **Attorney General Becerra Announces Sentencing of Vallejo Pastor and Co-Conspirator for Defrauding Members of Congregation**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced a state prison sentence of 23 years and eight months for Luther Feltus-Curry, a Vallejo pastor who masterminded a malicious fraud scheme preying on members of his own church congregation. Earlier this year, his co-conspirator Alma Perez was sentenced to 10 years in state prison for her role in the scheme.

“This is a despicable case in which church congregants trusted their pastor and then lost their life savings,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Today’s sentence serves as a stern warning – the California Department of Justice will vigorously descend on individuals who use positions of trust to scam people.”

While serving as pastor for a church in Vallejo, Feltus-Curry identified congregants who were retiring or who came upon large sums of money and took advantage of his position of trust to defraud them. From 2008 to 2012, the defendants created shell companies to...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-announces-sentencing-vallejo-pastor-and-co-conspirator>

September 26, 2017

### **Attorney General Becerra Announces Settlement with Gatorade Over Allegedly Misleading, Anti-Water Statements**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced the concurrent filing of a complaint and a settlement involving allegations that The Gatorade Company violated California consumer protection laws by making misleading statements about water in a mobile videogame application it used to promote Gatorade sports drinks to teens and young adults. The complaint filed by the Attorney General alleges that in the videogame “Bolt!”—made available free of charge on iTunes—Gatorade portrayed its products positively while inaccurately and negatively depicting water as hindering athletic performance. Specifically, users controlled a cartoon version of Olympic Gold Medalist Usain Bolt and ran an endless race to recover gold coins stolen by pirates. Upon touching a Gatorade icon, the Bolt avatar ran faster and the “fuel meter” increased; upon touching a water droplet, he slowed down and the “fuel meter” decreased. Gatorade reinforced this misleading message through the game’s

tutorial, which urged users to “Keep...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-announces-settlement-gatorade-over-allegedly-misleading>

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## COLORADO

September 20, 2017

### **AG Coffman Obtains \$7 Million Judgement Against Travel Club Scam**

DENVER, CO — Today Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced that a Denver court has ordered Stephen Wunder, Andrew Wunder, Bethany Wunder, and Christian Wunder, who owned and operated the Broomfield-based travel clubs Sea to Ski Vacations and Traditions Travel Group, to pay over \$7 million to Colorado for defrauding consumers.

The Wunder family promised members of their travel club deep discounts at exotic hotels and timeshares around the world. In reality, the Wunders did nothing more than search online travel websites to book their clients’ travels. Consumers ultimately paid the Wunders thousands of dollars for a service they could have gotten online for free.

The case stems from a 2013 lawsuit filed by the Colorado Attorney General alleging that the Wunders deceived consumers throughout the country in the operation of their travel club. The Court’s most recent decision stems from an appeal filed by Stephen Wunder. In its Order, the...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://coag.gov/press-room/press-releases/09-20-17>

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## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 27, 2017

### **Attorney General Racine Secures \$210,000 in Restitution for Residents of Apartments Where Illegal Hotel Was Operated**

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that his office has reached a settlement that will return approximately \$210,000 to long-term residents of two rent-controlled apartment buildings where the management company had allowed a short-term-rental firm to operate apartments like hotel rooms. The agreement with Daro Management Services, LLC and Daro Realty, LLC comes in a larger lawsuit that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Office of Consumer Protection brought earlier this year against those entities, as well as Ginosi USA Corporation; its owner, Eric Ginosian; and the owners and managers of two other apartment complexes in the District.

The settlement resolves the suit’s claims involving the owners and operators of two rent-controlled buildings in Ward 2: The Phoenix, at 1421 Massachusetts Avenue NW; and The Rodney, at 1911 R Street NW. Ginosi has operated short-term rentals out of as many as 46

separate apartments in...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-secures-210000-restitution-residents-apartments-where-illegal-hotel>

September 27, 2017

### **Attorney General Racine Secures Restitution for Terrace Manor Tenants, Continued Court Supervision after Bankruptcy Sale**

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that he has secured restitution and monetary penalties under a settlement of the District’s consumer protection claims against the owners and managers of the Terrace Manor apartments. Last year, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) brought suit against Sanford Capital LLC, Oakmont Management Group LLC, Terrace Manor LLC and Aubrey Carter Nowell, the owners and managers of the Ward 8 complex, alleging multiple violations of the District’s housing code and Consumer Protection Procedures Act.

Under the settlement, the property’s longtime owners will pay \$325,000 in restitution and penalties, including an average repayment of approximately \$9,500 to eligible former residents who lived in the complex while the violations existed. The restitution payment represents a disgorgement of 75 percent of the rent tenants paid while being forced to live in substandard housing. Attorney General Racine reached the settlement in connection with...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-secures-restitution-terrace-manor-tenants-continued-court>

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## IDAHO

September 18, 2017

### **Attorney General Announces Settlement with Boise-based Window and Blind Cleaning Service**

(BOISE) - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has announced a consumer protection settlement with Boise-based Four Seasons Window and Blind Cleaning and its owner Eric Biebuyck. Biebuyck (pronounced “Bee-buck”) has agreed to pay refunds to customers who prepaid for services they never received.

“I am pleased that Mr. Biebuyck is voluntarily returning money he did not earn,” Wasden said. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division received 14 complaints regarding Four Seasons Window and Blind Cleaning. Customer losses totaled more than \$4500. All of the complaints allege that Biebuyck accepted upfront payments for cleaning services he failed to provide.

Consumers who lost money to Four Seasons Window and Blind Cleaning, but who did not file a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General, have until October 15, 2017 to request a refund under the settlement. Consumers must file complaints with the Consumer Protection



Division and include documentation to support their refund requests. The Attorney...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr\\_09182017.html](http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr_09182017.html)

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## ILLINOIS

September 08, 2017

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST MOBILE HOME PARK OVER CONTAMINATED WATER**

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against Country Lane Mobile Home Park LLC, in Heyworth, Ill., over bacterial contamination in the park’s public water supply. The court also entered an agreed preliminary injunction order requiring the park owner to provide residents with safe drinking water.

Madigan filed the complaint and agreed preliminary injunction order in McLean County Circuit Court against Country Lane Mobile Home Park LLC, which owns the Country Lane Mobile Home Park, at One Country Lane, near Heyworth, Ill. The agreed order entered today will require the owner to investigate the source of the contamination, operate continuous chlorination equipment, and provide residents with safe drinking water and bottled water in one of the park’s common areas until the permanent public water supply is addressed.

According to Madigan’s complaint, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first cited the owner of the mobile home park in June after...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_09/20170908d.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_09/20170908d.html)

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## IOWA

September 15, 2017

### **Associates Behind Arizona-Based “At-Home Business Opportunity” Scheme Pay \$235,000 in Refunds to Iowans and Penalty to State**

DES MOINES – Ten associates of a sophisticated Arizona-based business opportunity scheme that Attorney General Tom Miller alleges is fraudulent and illegal have refunded nearly \$186,000 to more than a dozen Iowans through an agreement with Miller’s office.

The associates also agreed to cease any future marketing or soliciting to Iowans, and pay a \$50,000 penalty to the state’s consumer education and litigation fund.

The Consumer Protection Division opened an investigation late last year after the family of an elderly eastern Iowa woman filed a complaint after discovering the woman had agreed to pay for an “at-home business opportunity.” The Consumer Protection Division alleges a network of people and sham companies involved in the scheme bilked the woman out of \$25,000. The

division obtained refunds on the victim's behalf through several banks.

The investigation determined the network, led by Gloria Sue Perez, 63, of Phoenix, Arizona, involves at least ten people—all of whom...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/associates-behind-arizona-based-at-home-business-opportunity-scheme-pay-235000-in-refunds-to-iow/>

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## KANSAS

September 06, 2017

### **Pennsylvania man pleads guilty to financial crimes**

TOPEKA – (September 6, 2017) – A Pennsylvania man yesterday pleaded guilty to four felony counts of a sale of an unregistered security, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said. Kevin Charles Brown, 51, pleaded guilty to the four charges, which stemmed from incidents that occurred in Shawnee County between December 2011 and April 2013. The loss to Kansas investors was more than \$800,000. Shawnee County District Court Judge Nancy Parrish accepted the pleas.

Sentencing has been scheduled for December 19 at 9 a.m.

This is the first case of securities fraud prosecuted by the attorney general's office since a new law took effect in July consolidating the state's financial crime prosecution authority within the attorney general's office. The case was originally filed and investigated by the Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner. Deputy Attorney General Steven Karrer of Schmidt's office and Ryan Kriegshauser of the Kansas Securities Commissioner's Office are prosecuting the case....

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/06/pennsylvania-man-pleads-guilty-to-financial-crimes>

September 20, 2017

### **AG Derek Schmidt: Texas man fined for violating No-Call Act**

TOPEKA – (September 20, 2017) – A Texas man has been ordered to pay \$2,500 in penalties and fees for violating the No-Call Act, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt announced today. Bryan Sean Sturrock, Flower Mound, Texas, agreed to a consent judgment ordering him to pay \$2,500 in fees and civil penalties. The judgment was approved today by Judge Franklin R. Theis in Shawnee County District Court. In addition, Sturrock was enjoined from further violations of the Kansas No-Call Act and the Kansas Consumer Protection Act.

"We continue to vigorously pursue violations of the Kansas No-Call Act," Schmidt said. "Kansans who have signed up for the Do-Not-Call list have an expectation that their privacy be respected. We will enforce the law against those telemarketers who violate it."

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division began investigating Sturrock in 2014 after receiving a complaint from a Chanute consumer about receiving an unsolicited telemarketing

call. In...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/20/ag-derek-schmidt-texas-man-fined-for-violating-no-call-act>

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## MARYLAND

September 07, 2017

### **Baltimore City Circuit Judge Affirms Securities Commissioner’s Sanctions Against Phillip Rousseaux**

BALTIMORE, MD (September 7, 2017) –Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Althea Handy denied the relief sought in an appeal by Phillip Rousseaux, owner of Everest Wealth Management (EWM) and Everest Invest Advisors (EIA), and affirmed the Securities Commissioner’s sanctions against Rousseaux. Rousseaux and his companies were known for frequent “The Money Guys” infomercials that were a part of Rousseaux’s marketing campaign to attract customers with promises of guaranteed returns and limited risk.

“This case sends a strong message to any business that engages in fraudulent or deceptive investment advisory activities,” said Attorney General Frosh. “The Securities Division of my office will continue to protect consumers from these dishonest, unethical practices that can put at risk the hard-earned savings and investments of Marylanders.”

In her decision, Judge Handy stated: “In this case, the Commissioner’s sanction was ‘lawful and authorized,’ based [on] findings of fact and...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/090717.pdf>

September 12, 2017

### **Attorney General Frosh Secures \$100,000 Settlement with Pepco and Washington Gas Light**

BALTIMORE, MD (September 12, 2017) –Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division (“CPD”) has reached a \$100,000 settlement with Potomac Electric Power Company (“Pepco”) and Washington Gas Light Company (“WGL”) concerning the termination of utility services to Lynnhill Condominiums in Temple Hills, Maryland on October 25, 2016. The settlement requires Pepco and WGL to pay \$100,000 to Lynnhill occupants affected by the October 25, 2016 service terminations and to assist Prince George’s County residents who need help paying their winter heating bills.

The Division alleged that Pepco and WGL gave occupants only one day’s notice before cutting the power and gas to all 219 units, rather than the legally-required 14 days’ individualized notice. Prince George’s County temporarily declared the property uninhabitable following the utility termination. Occupants were forced out of their homes with no time to adequately plan where to sleep that night or how...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/091217.pdf>

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## MASSACHUSETTS

September 07, 2017

### **DraftKings and FanDuel to Pay \$2.6 Million to Resolve AG Investigation Into Pre-regulation Conduct**

BOSTON – DraftKings, Inc. and FanDuel, Inc. will pay a total of \$2.6 million after an investigation by Attorney General Maura Healey into alleged unfair and deceptive practices by the companies prior to her office’s 2016 promulgation of regulations governing daily fantasy sports. Through two settlement agreements reached with the companies, DraftKings and FanDuel will each pay \$1.3 million. Funds from these settlements will be used by the AG’s Office for grant programs to protect consumers and engage young people in technology.

“I am glad to have reached these settlements to address various consumer issues that existed at the early stages of this new industry,” said AG Healey. “We have since implemented a set of comprehensive regulations that provide consumers with broad-ranging protections and that have served as a model for many other states.”

The AG’s investigation predated the office’s implementation of consumer protection regulations that went into effect on July 1, 2016....

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-07-draftkings-and-fanduel.html>

September 12, 2017

### **AG Healey Announces Intent to Sue Equifax After Major Data Breach**

BOSTON – Following a major data breach at credit reporting firm Equifax Inc., Attorney General Maura Healey today announced her intent to sue the company over its failure to protect sensitive and personal information of up to nearly three million Massachusetts residents.

“In all of our years investigating data breaches, this may be the most brazen failure to protect consumer data we have ever seen,” said AG Healey. “My office is acting as quickly as possible to hold Equifax accountable for the risks that millions of consumers now face.”

According to Equifax, the breach reported last week potentially compromised the personal information of 143 million consumers nationwide, including nearly three million Massachusetts consumers. On Friday, AG Healey launched an immediate investigation to determine the scope of risk to consumers and whether the company had proper safeguards in place to protect consumer information. The AG’s Office also issued guidance for consumers in...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-12-intent-to-sue-equifax.html>

September 19, 2017

### **AG Healey Sues Equifax**

BOSTON – Following a major data breach at credit reporting firm Equifax Inc., Attorney General Maura Healey today filed the nation’s first enforcement action links to PDF file over the company’s failure to protect sensitive and personal information of nearly three million

Massachusetts residents.

“We allege that Equifax knew about the vulnerabilities in its system for months, but utterly failed to keep the personal information of nearly three million Massachusetts residents safe from hackers,” said AG Healey. “We are suing because Equifax needs to pay for its mistakes, make our residents whole, and fix the problem so it never happens again.”

According to Equifax, the breach reported earlier this month potentially compromised the personal information of 143 million consumers nationwide, including nearly three million Massachusetts consumers. AG Healey immediately launched an investigation to determine the scope of risk to consumers and whether the company had proper safeguards in place to protect...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-19-equifax-lawsuit.html>

September 22, 2017

### **AG Healey Provides Refunds to Thousands of Consumers Over Lawn Company’s Abusive Debt Collection Practices**

BOSTON – A lawn care company will pay full restitution to thousands of consumers, change its practices, and pay penalties as a result of a settlement to resolve claims it used abusive and illegal debt collection practices, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The consent judgment, entered in Suffolk Superior Court, resolves AG Healey’s lawsuit against Foreman Turf Specialties, Inc. d/b/a TLC The Lawn Company (TLC), and owner Jack R. Foreman, Jr., for unfair and deceptive debt collection practices.

“This lawn care company tricked customers into signing contracts with hidden fees and then sued more than 1,500 customers for amounts that they didn’t owe,” said AG Healey. “My office will not allow companies abuse our court system and trap consumers in deceptive contracts.”

The AG’s complaint alleges that TLC routinely added hidden charges and fees to consumer’s accounts, causing consumers to pay money that they didn’t owe. TLC also aggressively pursued collection...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-22-lawn-company.html>

September 26, 2017

### **AG Healey Sues Auto Dealer JD Byrider for Predatory Sales and Loan Practices**

BOSTON – Attorney General Maura Healey announced today that she has sued Massachusetts used car dealership JD Byrider for allegedly using predatory practices in its sale of defective vehicles with high cost loans at four locations in Massachusetts.

The AG’s lawsuit links to PDF file alleges that JD Byrider took advantage of consumers by routinely trapping them in an unsustainable and unfavorable sales package, known as the “JD Byrider Program.” This program generally involves selling drivers a poor quality car with a high cost loan, along with an expensive extended service contract, marketed through an aggressive

and misleading advertising and sales campaign.

“We allege that JD Byrider ripped off Massachusetts drivers by offering predatory loans for defective and inoperable cars,” said AG Healey. “Our goal in this lawsuit is to recover losses to Massachusetts consumers and make this company pay for the harm they caused to thousands of drivers across this state.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-26-jd-byrider-lawsuit.html>

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## MICHIGAN

September 26, 2017

### **Schuetz Files Suit Against West Michigan-based Gym Chain Family Fitness Alleging Numerous Consumer Protection Act Violations**

LANSING – Attorney General Bill Schuetz today announced he has filed a class action lawsuit against the West Michigan-based fitness chain, Family Fitness, in Kent County Circuit Court. The complaint asks the Court to put a stop to various practices by Family Fitness that allegedly violate Michigan’s Consumer Protection Act, and seeks monetary relief on behalf of consumers. This action comes after Schuetz has received 286 consumer complaints against Family Fitness in 2017.

“These entities have been taking advantage of the hard-working people in West Michigan, and it’s time for that to stop,” Schuetz said. “It is my hope that we can reform Family Fitness’ business practices, and get some money back in the pockets of many consumers. We will also ask the Court to make sure the credit reports of Michigan consumers no longer show debts arising from unlawful conduct by these fitness clubs.”

There are fourteen Family Fitness centers in...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849\\_47203-448193--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-448193--,00.html)

September 28, 2017

### **Schuetz Issues Cease and Desist to Allegedly Deceptive Veterans Charity**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuetz today announced a Notice of Intended Action and Cease and Desist Order against American Veterans Foundation of Sarasota, Florida for over two hundred thousand violations of the Charitable Organizations and Solicitations Act. Violations included deceptive solicitations and diversion of funds raised to other purposes. Over 12,000 donations – totaling more than \$250,000 – were received from Michigan donors.

“This is the third deceptive veterans charity this year that my office has acted against,” said Schuetz. “As I’ve said before: our troops deserve better; our citizens deserve better. And other deceptive charities should take this as a warning to shape up or stay out of Michigan.”

## Case Background

American Veterans Foundation (AVF) came to the attention of the Attorney General's Charitable Trust Section through an audit of its charitable solicitation registration and IRS Form 990 and through its connections to questionable telemarketing fundraisers Courtesy Call and Donor...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849\\_47203-448404--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-448404--,00.html)

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## MINNESOTA

September 01, 2017

### **Attorney General Lori Swanson Obtains Court Order Awarding Injunction, Penalties, and Restitution for Minnesota School of Business and Globe University Fraudulently Misrepresenting the Job Opportunities Available to their Criminal Justice Graduates**

On September 8, 2016, the Hennepin County District Court issued an order finding the Minnesota School of Business and Globe University—Minnesota corporations under common ownership—engaged in consumer fraud and deceptive trade practices by misrepresenting the job opportunities available to their criminal justice graduates.

The Order is the result of a four-week trial of a lawsuit filed by Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson against the schools in 2014. The lawsuit alleged that the schools targeted, marketed, and recommended their criminal justice program to prospective students who told the schools they wanted to become Minnesota police officers, even though it was impossible for a student to become a police officer in Minnesota with a degree from the schools. The schools' criminal justice program does not satisfy any of the educational requirements for a person to become a licensed police officer under Minnesota law because the schools are not regionally-accredited institutions and do...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20161101SchoolofBusiness.asp>

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## MISSISSIPPI

September 01, 2017

### **Alcorn County Man Arrested in AG's Largest Counterfeit Investigation**

Today, Attorney General Jim Hood announced the arrest of 43 year-old Russell Haynie on multiple felony charges after a major counterfeit investigation.

Haynie, of Alcorn County, was arrested at his home Wednesday morning by investigators with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection and Cyber Crime Divisions, where investigators found over \$2 million worth of counterfeit goods. Items discovered included Yeti-brand

products, Life Proof and Otter Box phone cases, Ray Ban sunglasses, Beats by Dre, and Apple and Bose products. Investigators also found multiple high-end bags by Michael Kors, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Coach, MCM, and Tory Burch.

The search of Haynie's home was part of General Hood's Knock Out Knock Offs (KOKO) Taskforce, and it was the largest undercover counterfeit operation since the KOKO's inception eight years ago. Multiple agencies assisted in the investigation, including the Alcorn County Sheriff's Department, United States Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Postal Service. Haynie was booked...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/alcorn-county-man-arrested-in-ags-largest-counterfeit-investigation/>

September 12, 2017

### **Sumrall Man Arrested For Embezzling Money from Insurance Customers**

Today, Attorney General Jim Hood announced the arrest of 30-year-old Brian Hudson, who is charged on a six-count indictment out of Lamar County.

Hudson, of Sumrall, turned himself into the Lamar County Sheriff's Office Monday on two felony counts each of wire fraud and embezzlement as well as one misdemeanor count each of embezzlement and uttering forgery. While working as an insurance agent, Hudson embezzled more than \$34,000. He converted customers' premium payments for his own use and changed the mailing addresses of customers without their permission in order to receive their refund checks, which he also converted for his own use.

If convicted on all six counts, Hudson faces 21 years behind bars, \$32,000 in fines, and full restitution. His bond was set at \$15,000, and an arraignment was scheduled for October 2 at 1:00 p.m. A charge is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/sumrall-man-arrested-for-embezzling-money-from-insurance-customers/>

September 18, 2017

### **Tupelo Woman Arrested for Posing as Highway Patrol Trainee to Raise Money**

Today, Attorney General Jim Hood announced the arrest of 30-year-old Natasha Lesha Stephens for fraudulently acting as a highway patrolman recruit to raise money online. Stephens, of Tupelo, was arrested at her home Friday by Investigator Lee McDivitt with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, with assistance from detectives with the Tupelo Police Department. Stephens set up a GoFundMe page online to raise \$1,000 for what she listed as required items for Mississippi Highway Patrol Cadet Class 62, to which she claimed on the page that she had been accepted.

In describing the fake campaign, Stephens wrote: "I have been blessed with the opportunity to



become a part of something much higher than myself. I have been accepted in the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol Cadet Class 62 that begins this October. A list of required items has been given. Unfortunately I am unable to financially obtain those items. I am asking for...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/tupelo-woman-arrested-for-posing-as-highway-patrol-trainee-to-raise-money/>

September 26, 2017

### **Choctaw County Funeral Home Owner Arrested for Defrauding Customers**

Today, Attorney General Jim Hood announced the arrest of 42-year-old Kimredell Dotson on four counts of committing false pretense in connection with his collection of insurance premiums on two separate life insurance policies and failing to forward the premiums to the insurance company.

Dotson, a funeral home owner in McCool, turned himself in to the Choctaw County Sheriff's Office Thursday after a warrant was issued following an indictment by a Choctaw County grand jury last month on the four charges. He was indicted for defrauding his customers in an amount greater than \$500, in four separate instances between 2010 and 2013.

Dotson made false representations to his customers that he was forwarding their insurance premium payments to Security National Life Insurance Company for their life insurance policies. However, the payments were never turned in to the company. His fraudulent activity was discovered as part of an investigation by the Secretary of State's...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/choctaw-county-funeral-home-owner-arrested-for-defrauding-customers/>

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## MONTANA

September 15, 2017

### **Colstrip to Receive Minimum of \$10 Million for Community Impact As Result of Rate Case Settlement**

Through a settlement agreement filed Friday with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, the town of Colstrip would receive a minimum of \$10 million dollars to mitigate economic impact from the closure of two electricity generating units owned by the Washington utility, Puget Sound Energy. The settlement is part of an electricity rate case filed in January by Puget Sound Energy, a part owner of all four units at the Colstrip facility.

Speaking to the settlement, Montana Attorney General Tim Fox said, "In representing the state's interests in this rate case, my office has made clear through negotiations with PSE our expectation that the utility fulfill its responsibilities to the state of Montana. This settlement is a good start, and we urge the Washington UTC to approve it as agreed upon by the parties."

In July, Attorney General Fox met in Helena with executives from Puget Sound Energy to urge

the utility...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://dojmt.gov/colstrip-receive-minimum-10-million-community-impact-result-rate-case-settlement/>

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## NEVADA

September 12, 2017

### **Attorney General Laxalt Launches Investigation Into Equifax Breach**

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that his office has launched an investigation into the recent report that Equifax Inc., one of the nation’s three major credit reporting agencies, was the target of a cyber-attack that affected approximately 143 million Americans. The breach, which took place from mid-May through July of this year, neglected to keep important personal identifying information safe and allowed hackers to access names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and even some driver’s license numbers. As a result of this breach, approximately 209,000 individuals throughout the country are estimated to have had their credit card numbers stolen.

“As a part of my commitment to safeguard the identities and personal information of Nevadans, my office will be working diligently with other states to investigate the cause of the Equifax breach,” said Laxalt. “In the meantime, I encourage Nevadans to contact Equifax to...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney\\_General\\_Laxalt\\_Launches\\_Investigation\\_Into\\_Equifax\\_Breach/](http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Launches_Investigation_Into_Equifax_Breach/)

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

September 22, 2017

### **Attorney General Resolves Allegations of Consumer Protection Act Violation Against NH Real Estate Agent (revised)**

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announces that the Consumer Protection and Antitrust Bureau has resolved a civil enforcement action against real estate agent Linda Gray of Greenfield, NH for violating the New Hampshire Consumer Protection Act.

The State's complaint alleged that Ms. Gray, in the course of representing the buyer of a house in Chesterfield, NH, falsified a water test report form to deceptively indicate that the house's well water had been tested for arsenic and contained an extremely elevated level of arsenic. The State alleged that this deception allowed Ms. Gray's client to secure a significant price reduction from the seller of the property. The State's subsequent investigation determined that the well on the property does not have elevated arsenic levels and that the water testing company, whose form was falsified, did not perform any test for arsenic.

The Consumer Protection Act prohibits any unfair or deceptive act or practice in...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170922-revised-linda-gray.htm>

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## NEW JERSEY

September 12, 2017

### **Apple Inc. Agrees to Install Continuously Available Pricing Information on Merchandise Display Tables in its New Jersey Stores in Settlement with Division of Consumer Affairs**

NEWARK – Apple Inc. (“Apple”) has agreed to install continuously available pricing information for iPhones, iPads, MacBooks, Apple Watches and other electronic devices on display in its New Jersey stores, to resolve an investigation by the Division of Consumer Affairs.

The new 4 ½ inch by 3 ½ inch “pricing wedges” will be placed on each table where these devices are offered for sale and will contain the total selling price of each type of device displayed on that table. The pricing wedges will supplement Apple’s existing in-store digital pricing system, which provides price information through apps and notifications that are launched from the devices themselves.

The Division alleged that Apple’s in-store digital pricing system violated New Jersey’s consumer protection laws because the pricing information was not continuously available for customers to view, making it necessary at times for customers to interact with a device or a sales representative to find how...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170912a.html>

September 13, 2017

### **Judge Orders Passaic County Travel Agency and its Owner to Permanently Cease Doing Business in NJ, and Pay \$277,000 for Defrauding Consumers**

NEWARK – A Superior Court judge has ordered a Paterson travel company and its owner to pay \$277,000 and permanently cease doing business in New Jersey after finding they defrauded customers who purchased travel and/or vacation planning services that were never provided.

Denyse H. Turner and her company RX 4 Fun Travel, LLC (“RX 4 Fun”) violated New Jersey’s consumer protection laws by accepting payments for travel and/or vacation planning services - including hotel, flight, and/or cruise reservations - then failing to make the arrangements, or cancelling them after the payments were received, according to a ruling by Judge Thomas J. Laconte in Passaic County on Monday.

The court’s ruling granted an Order to Show Cause Summary Action filed against the defendants by the Attorney General and the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs.

“Consumers who purchase vacation packages deserve to enjoy their time away, not end up

stuck at home, dealing...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170913b.html>

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## NEW MEXICO

September 07, 2017

### **Attorney General Balderas Files Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers and Distributors for Fueling the Opioid Epidemic that is Crippling New Mexico**

Albuquerque, NM - Attorney General Hector Balderas announced today that he has brought a lawsuit on behalf of the State of New Mexico against the country's largest manufacturers and wholesale distributors of opioids, a crucial first step toward holding these companies responsible for flooding New Mexico's communities with prescription opioids and fueling the opioid epidemic by putting profits over people. The State of New Mexico is filing suit against five of the largest manufacturers of prescription opioids and their related companies and against the country's three largest wholesale drug distributors. manufacturing companies pushed highly addictive, dangerous opioids, falsely representing to doctors that patients would only rarely succumb to drug addiction, while the distributors breached their legal duties to monitor, detect, investigate, refuse and report suspicious orders of prescription opioids. "New Mexico continues to endure the most catastrophic effects of the opioid crisis, all while major out of state corporations make...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG\\_Balderas\\_Files\\_Lawsuit\\_Against\\_Opioid\\_Manufacturers\\_and\\_Distributors.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG_Balderas_Files_Lawsuit_Against_Opioid_Manufacturers_and_Distributors.pdf)

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## NEW YORK

September 05, 2017

### **Operation Vandelay Industries: A.G. Schneiderman Announces State Prison Sentence For Fake Architect**

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that Paul J. Newman, President of Cohesion Studios, Inc., will serve 2 1/3 to 7 years in state prison on six felony convictions in Albany, Rensselaer, and Saratoga Counties, where Newman—posing as a licensed and registered architect—defrauded construction companies, business owners, and municipalities throughout the Capital Region. Today's sentencing took place in Saratoga County Court; Newman will be sentenced to concurrent prison sentences in Albany and Rensselaer County Courts later this week and next week.

"Deceptively posing as a licensed and registered architect has real consequences – including prison time," said Attorney General Schneiderman. "Those who wish to game the system and

take advantage of New Yorkers should take note: no license, no work for you. My office will continue to uphold this standard.”

As a result of the Attorney General’s investigation “Operation Vandelay Industries,” in April 2017 Newman was arrested on three...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/operation-vandelay-industries-ag-schneiderman-announces-state-prison-sentence-fake>

September 08, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Launches Formal Investigation Into Equifax Breach, Issues Consumer Alert**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today issued a consumer alert following the report that Equifax Inc., one of the nation’s three major credit reporting agencies, experienced a massive breach affecting 143 million Americans and over 8 million New Yorkers. Today, as part of a formal investigation into the incident, Attorney General Schneiderman sent a letter to Equifax seeking additional information about the breach. The breach lasted from mid-May through July, when hackers accessed names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some instances, driver’s license numbers. Approximately 209,000 individuals had their credit card numbers stolen.

“The Equifax breach has potentially exposed sensitive personal information of nearly everyone with a credit report, and my office intends to get to the bottom of how and why this massive hack occurred,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “I encourage all New Yorkers to immediately call Equifax to see if their data was...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-launches-formal-investigation-equifax-breach-issues-consumer-alert>

September 14, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Driveway Paving Contractor**

BINGHAMTON - Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement with Richard Williams II, a home improvement contractor that does business under the name “R. Williams Paving” in Stillwater, who repeatedly and persistently ripped off consumers in the Southern Tier. Mr. Williams and his crew went door-to-door seeking to pave or repair driveways, but then performed poor and incomplete work, attempted to charge customers for extra work that was not initially agreed upon, and failed to abide by New York’s home improvement contract laws. As part of the agreement with the Attorney General, Mr. Williams paid \$2,884 in consumer restitution and \$2,000 in penalties and costs; one consumer who had not yet paid for the work had her contract cancelled.

“New Yorkers deserve to receive the full services they paid for, in a professional and timely

manner – not be duped by fraudulent businesses seeking to make a few extra...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-driveway-paving-contractor>

September 19, 2017

### **Following A.G. Schneiderman Investigation, Walgreens Restructures Rite Aid Acquisition To Address Competition Concerns**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today that, following his office’s investigation into Walgreens’ proposed acquisition of thousands of Rite Aid stores in New York and across the country, Walgreens has restructured the acquisition to address concerns that it would limit retail competition in the New York area. Walgreens and Rite Aid are the second- and third-largest retail pharmacy chains in the U.S, serving huge numbers of New York consumers, as well as businesses that purchase drug coverage for their employees. Walgreens initially proposed to acquire 2,186 stores from Rite Aid, including 456 Rite Aid stores in New York State.

To resolve competitive concerns raised by Attorney General Schneiderman and the Federal Trade Commission, Walgreens agreed to acquire fewer stores in New York State and the New York City metropolitan region than it originally had planned. Walgreens will now acquire 272 stores in New York State, with...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/following-ag-schneiderman-investigation-walgreens-restructures-rite-aid-acquisition>

September 19, 2017

### **Following Equifax Breach, A.G. Schneiderman Sends Data Security Inquiries To Experian And TransUnion**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has sent formal inquiries regarding data security to Experian and TransUnion, the two other major credit reporting agencies, following the Equifax data breach that exposed the personal information of millions of New Yorkers.

In letters sent to the CEOs of the two companies, the Attorney General’s office asks them to detail the security measures that were in place before they learned of the Equifax breach; steps the companies have taken since learning of the breach to ensure that they haven’t already suffered similar intrusions and won’t experience breaches moving forward; and how they will further assist consumers in protecting their personal information.

On September 7th, Equifax, one of the nation’s three major credit reporting agencies, announced a massive breach affecting 143 million Americans and over 8 million New Yorkers.

Hackers accessed names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and,...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/following-equifax-breach-ag-schneiderman-sends-data-security-inquiries-experian-and>

September 21, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Lawsuit Against Erie County Funeral Home Director**

BUFFALO—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced a lawsuit against funeral home director Elizabeth Wurtz, owner and operator of the Wurtz Funeral Home located at 9287 Boston State Road in Erie County. Wurtz failed to register the Wurtz Funeral Home as required by state law, and the Bureau of Funeral Home Directing ordered her to close it on December 29, 2011. Unknown to the Bureau, however, Wurtz ignored the order and continued to operate the funeral home. In June 2016, Wurtz ceased operating the Wurtz Funeral Home and moved to Central New York, but allegedly failed to refund and provide services to at least eight individuals who collectively made more than \$49,000 in advance payments.

The suit alleges that Wurtz did not notify or pay back the consumers who had made advance payments to her. As a result, panicked consumers began contacting the Bureau of Funeral Home Directing, which sought to help...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-lawsuit-against-erie-county-funeral-home-director>

September 27, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Convictions Of Wall Street Financier For Financial Fraud, Including Stealing From Bronx Church And Villanova University**

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today the convictions of Anthony Nyame for stealing over \$3.5 million from multiple victims. In one scheme, Nyame stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from his victims, including the First Ghana Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Bronx, by inducing them into believing that his Wall Street based company, General Capital Corporation, had the ability to secure millions of dollars in loans. In a different scheme, Nyame stole over \$2.5 from Villanova University through a cyber-attack. Today, Nyame, of Bronx county, pleaded guilty in New York County Supreme Court to Grand Larceny in the First Degree, a Class “B” felony. Previously, on September 13, 2017, Nyame pleaded guilty to two counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a Class “C” felony, and one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class “D” felony.

“It is simply appalling that anyone would choose...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-convictions-wall-street-financier-financial-fraud-including>

September 27, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman, Gov. Cuomo, & Mayor De Blasio Announce Settlement With Major NYC Landlord To End Tenant Harassment And Hazardous Living Conditions**

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, and Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a first of its kind settlement between the Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force (Task Force) and ICON Realty Management (ICON). This settlement provides tenants broad relief, requiring the landlord to end harassment and hazardous living conditions for the hundreds of tenants in buildings owned and managed by ICON.

Tenants in several ICON-owned rent-regulated buildings in the East Village, the Lower East Side, and Brooklyn were forced to live in adverse conditions, enduring excessive dust and debris from construction in the building common areas and apartments, inconsistent and irregular heat and hot water, and lack of cooking gas and elevator service for extended periods. The Task Force investigation found that, on multiple occasions, ICON failed to obtain Department of Buildings (DOB) work permits, performed construction outside the scope of permits issued, and failed to appropriately clean...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-gov-cuomo-mayor-de-blasio-announce-settlement-major-nyc-landlord-end>

September 28, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Lawsuit Against Buffalo Furniture Store**

BUFFALO—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced a lawsuit against Chairs & Tables Inc, a furniture store located at 2085 South Park Avenue in Buffalo, and its owner James Damico (referred to collectively as “Damico”). The Attorney General’s office received several complaints from consumers detailing how Damico allegedly charged advanced payments for furniture, yet failed to actually deliver the items after the consumers had paid for them. Damico also allegedly failed to give consumers written estimated delivery dates for the furniture, as required by the New York General Business Law. The Attorney General’s lawsuit seeks to require Damico to identify all consumers from whom he received an advanced payment but has not provided any merchandise, and pay victims full restitution. The lawsuit also seeks to protect future consumers by banning Damico from the furniture business unless he posts a \$20,000 bond to protect consumers who may provide down payments in the...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-lawsuit-against-buffalo-furniture-store>

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PENNSYLVANIA

September 08, 2017

**Attorney General Shapiro investigating Equifax data breach**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro’s Bureau of Consumer Protection has opened an



investigation into a massive data breach involving Equifax, a national credit-reporting agency, which impacted up to 143 million consumers nationwide. Shapiro is leading this national, multistate investigation along with the Attorneys General of Connecticut and Illinois. This investigation will review Equifax's report that cyber criminals gained access to consumers' names, Social Security numbers, birthdates, addresses and, in some cases, driver's license information. Their report also indicated that credit card numbers for about 209,000 consumers and documents containing personal information related to credit reporting disputes for about 182,000 people were compromised. Equifax said the breach occurred sometime between mid-May and July. The company said it discovered the hack on July 29. It is unclear at this time how many Pennsylvania consumers have been impacted.

"This is a massive data breach of the personal and financial information of millions of...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media\\_and\\_Resources/Press\\_Releases/Press\\_Release/?pid=3956](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3956)

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## TEXAS

September 11, 2017

### **AG Paxton Files Suit Against 'Reputation Management' Company**

Attorney General Ken Paxton recently filed a petition with the Harris County District Court alleging that Solvera, an online reputation management company, violated the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act by abusing the legal system to deceive Harris County district court judges with its defamation lawsuits.

The lawsuit alleges that Solvera perpetuated a "reputation management" scheme by filing lawsuits it knew contained false information – including fictitious plaintiffs and defendants. As a result, nationwide consumers, Texas attorneys and judges, along with search engines such as Google were all duped.

"At every step in its so-called reputation management process, Solvera repeatedly employed false, deceptive and misleading practices," Attorney General Paxton said. "My office will not allow Texas consumers, attorneys, and courts to be confused and deceived by this unlawful behavior."

Through its deceptive use of the legal process, Solvera was successful in deleting a number of potentially legitimate comments posted in the review section of...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-files-suit-against-reputation-management-company>

September 12, 2017

### **AG Paxton Files Suit Against Three Businesses for Price Gouging During Hurricane Harvey**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today filed lawsuits against three Texas businesses, accusing them

of unlawful price gouging while consumers were in need of fuel, shelter and other essentials as a result of Hurricane Harvey.

“It’s unconscionable that any business would take advantage of Texans at their most vulnerable – those who are displaced from their homes, have limited resources, and are in desperate need of fuel, shelter and the basic necessities of life,” Attorney General Paxton said. “Texas has tough price gouging laws, and my office will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute cases arising from Hurricane Harvey.”

Texas law prohibits vendors from charging exorbitant prices for necessities such as drinking water, food, clothing, and fuel during a declared disaster. The attorney general named the following defendants in Hurricane Harvey price gouging lawsuits:

Robstown Enterprises, Inc., doing business as Best Western Plus Tropic Inn. The Robstown-based hotel allegedly charged three times its...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-files-suit-against-three-businesses-for-price-gouging-during-hurr>

September 29, 2017

### **AG Paxton: Texas Reaches \$2 Million Settlement with Fraudulent Lead Generation Company**

Attorney General Ken Paxton announced that Texas secured an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC) with LowerMyBills, a lead generation company that misled consumers toward Credit Alliance Group (CAG), which falsely advertised its accreditation and debt management process. This AVC secured \$2 million in restitution for eligible consumers. The attorney general’s office sued CAG in 2013 for defrauding customers out of millions of dollars entrusted to settle their debts, and for providing debt management services unauthorized by the Texas Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner, actions that cost hundreds of consumers thousands of dollars in losses. CAG claimed it would eliminate 20 to 60 percent of a consumer’s outstanding debt within three years. However, customers were charged up-front fees as high as 35 percent of the debt they owed, and CAG was found depositing customer payments into its own operating account. The attorney general’s office brought action against both LowerMyBills and CAG under...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-texas-reaches-2-million-settlement-with-fraudulent-lead-generatio>

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## VERMONT

September 22, 2017

### **Vermont Landlords Settle Claims For Violations Of Lead Law**

The Attorney General’s Office settled with four landlords in Vermont for violations of consumer protection and lead laws. Vermont’s lead law protects all Vermonters, especially children, from

the harmful effects of lead poisoning. Every landlord with pre-1978 rental properties is required to submit annual compliance statements which show that the landlords have performed the essential maintenance practices (known as EMPs) and the properties are in compliance with the lead law.

Charles Desautels, owner of thirteen rental properties in Richford and Enosburg Falls, will pay a \$5,000 penalty for failing to file annual EMP compliance statements after notice and warning. Gordon Watson, owner of four rental properties in the Barre City area, will pay a \$3,500 penalty for failing to file EMP statements after notice and warning. David Bushey, owner of seven rental properties in St. Albans, was assessed a \$5,000 penalty for failing to file EMP statements after notice and warning....

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/vermont-landlords-settle-claims-for-violations-of-lead-law.php>

September 29, 2017

### **Attorney General Settles Data Breach Case for \$264,000; Issues \$400 Per Social Security Number Penalty**

The Attorney General reached a settlement today regarding a security breach involving the Social Security numbers of 660 Vermont Health Connect users. SAManage USA, Inc., a technology company that provides business-support services, agreed to alter its information security and legal compliance programs and to pay a penalty of \$264,000.

In July 2016, SAManage's IT ticketing system allowed an excel spreadsheet containing the 660 social security numbers to be viewed publicly without requiring authentication. A Microsoft Bing web crawler discovered the URL of the spreadsheet and incorporated it into its search results, where it was found by a Vermonter, who reported the breach to the Attorney General. The Attorney General then investigated the SAManage breach. It appeared that due to a miscommunication within the company, this breach would have gone unreported were it not for the Attorney General's intervention.

"My office takes data breach very seriously," said Attorney General T.J. Donovan. "Vermonters are...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/attorney-general-settles-data-breach-case-for-\\$264000-issues-\\$400-per-social-security-number-penalty.php](http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/attorney-general-settles-data-breach-case-for-$264000-issues-$400-per-social-security-number-penalty.php)

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## VIRGINIA

September 06, 2017

### **CASHCALL BORROWERS TO BEGIN RECEIVING SETTLEMENT PAYMENTS TOTALING OVER NINE MILLION DOLLARS**

RICHMOND (September 6, 2017) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that

more than 9,000 Virginia borrowers who were harmed by a "rent-a-tribe" predatory lending scheme will receive checks averaging \$982 as part of a settlement totaling \$9.435 million negotiated by Attorney General Herring and class action litigants. Eligible borrowers include those from whom CashCall, Inc. collected excessive interest on loans. Check distribution began on Tuesday September 5, and affected borrowers should receive their checks in the coming weeks.

"Predatory lenders like CashCall plague the most vulnerable Virginia consumers-those forced to resort to high-interest loans to pay for basic necessities like groceries or rent," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "Settlements like this send a clear message that my team and I will not allow lenders to deceive, defraud, or abuse Virginians, and we'll hold those accountable that do. Borrowers who qualified for the settlement should be on the lookout..."

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1026-september-6-2017-cashcall-borrowers-to-begin-receiving-settlement-payments-totaling-over-nine-million-dollars>

September 11, 2017

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH MANASSAS PARK-AREA PAWNBROKER**

10/11/2017 RICHMOND (September 11, 2017) - Attorney General Mark Herring announced today that his office has reached a settlement with A to Z Pawn, Inc. (A to Z Pawn), a Manassas Park-area pawnbroker, to provide more than \$41,500 in refunds to more than 630 consumers as a result of the company's alleged violations of the Virginia statutes applicable to pawnbrokers and the Virginia Consumer Protection Act (VCPA).

"In recent years we have seen a rash of pawnbrokers around Virginia skirting laws and overcharging consumers," said Attorney General Herring. "This is the 8th settlement we have announced with a pawnbroker over the past seven months. If you're considering using a pawn shop or other small dollar loan lender, you should always closely review the terms and know your rights before signing anything that might result in even more money coming out of your pocket."

A to Z Pawn has operated as...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1030-september-11-2017-attorney-general-herring-reaches-settlement-with-manassas-park-area-pawnbroker>

September 13, 2017

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING SUES ALLIED TITLE LENDING, LLC FOR MAKING OPEN-END CREDIT LOANS ALLEGED TO VIOLATE CONSUMER STATUTES**

RICHMOND (September 13, 2017) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring filed a lawsuit against

open-end credit plan lender, Allied Title Lending LLC, d/b/a Allied Cash Advance for allegedly making illegal, unlicensed loans at 273.75% annual interest, and for violating the Virginia consumer finance statutes and the Virginia Consumer Protection Act in connection with the company's lending practice.

"Virginia consumers have a right to expect that lenders that conduct business in the Commonwealth and that profit from charging these high interest rates will comply with our laws," said Attorney General Herring. "I am dedicated to enforcing consumer protection laws when it becomes clear they have been violated and I intend to hold lenders accountable to Virginia's citizens for their conduct."

Attorney General Herring is seeking restitution on behalf of consumers, civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and asking the court to ban Allied from further violating the Virginia open-end credit statute, our consumer...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1032-september-13-2017-attorney-general-herring-sues-allied-title-lending-llc-for-making-open-end-credit-loans-alleged-to-violate-consumer-statutes>

September 15, 2017

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING ANNOUNCES LAWSUIT AGAINST VIRGINIA-BASED TAX DEBT SETTLEMENT COMPANY**

RICHMOND (September 15, 2017) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that his office has filed a lawsuit against Wall & Associates, Inc., a Virginia-based company that sells tax debt settlement services to consumers nationwide, for alleged violations of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act (VCPA).

"Consumers struggling with tax debt face difficult and sometimes confusing choices, and they shouldn't be afraid that they'll be misled by a company they're going to to seek help," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "We contend that Wall & Associates offers easy answers, misleading consumers about its tax debt resolution services and how much debt settlement it can achieve, while charging them thousands of dollars in fees. My team and I will continue to hold those who take advantage of consumers accountable for their actions."

Attorney General Herring is seeking restitution on behalf of affected consumers, civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and asking the court...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1033-september-15-2017-attorney-general-herring-announces-lawsuit-against-virginia-based-tax-debt-settlement-company>

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## WASHINGTON

September 14, 2017

### **More than \$41M headed to consumers in AG Ferguson’s LCD price-fixing case**

OLYMPIA — Beginning next week, checks will be in the mail for consumers affected by an elaborate price-fixing conspiracy by LCD manufacturers, Attorney General Bob Ferguson announced today. A total of \$41.1 million is on its way to 24,632 consumers and businesses in all 39 counties.

The recovery is among the largest in the AGO Antitrust Division’s history.

“This conspiracy affected millions of products Washingtonians purchased over a period of eight years,” Ferguson said. “This step brings closure and a measure of justice to consumers who were harmed by this scheme. When powerful interests don’t play by the rules, my office will be there to hold them accountable.”

Rather than participate in a multistate case, the Attorney General’s Office chose to pursue an individual case in order to get a better deal for Washington consumers. The recovery in the state’s individual lawsuit may be as much as 30 percent higher than what Washington...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/more-41m-headed-consumers-ag-ferguson-s-lcd-price-fixing-case>

September 28, 2017

### **AG Ferguson sues one of the nation’s largest opioid manufacturers over state’s opioid epidemic**

SEATTLE — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today filed a lawsuit accusing OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma of fueling the opioid epidemic in Washington state, embarking on a massive deceptive marketing campaign and convincing doctors and the public that their drugs are effective for treating chronic pain and have a low risk of addiction, contrary to overwhelming evidence. This deceptive marketing resulted in the deaths of Washingtonians and devastation to Washington families.

The lawsuit contends Purdue conducted an uncontrolled experiment on the American public without any reliable clinical evidence that opioids are effective at treating chronic pain. To doctors and patients, Purdue consistently downplayed the risks of addiction from long-term use and deceptively represented opioids as safe for treating long-term chronic pain.

Purdue’s deception yielded the company billions of dollars in profit nationwide from its opioid drugs. Ferguson’s lawsuit seeks to force Purdue to forfeit the Washington portion of those profits.

The City of Seattle...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-sues-one-nation-s-largest-opioid-manufacturers-over-state-s-opioid>

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## WEST VIRGINIA

September 21, 2017

### **Attorney General Morrisey Returns More Than \$22K To Families, Schools Wronged By Charter Bus Company**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey recently mailed checks totaling \$22,682 to groups and individuals, refunding their payments for canceled services from a charter bus company.

The checks follow the Attorney General securing an agreed upon order requiring Cav's Coach Company, LLC and its owner, Christopher Todd Cavender, to refund money paid for canceled field trips at Kermit Area School and Crum Middle School, as well as a canceled family vacation. "I am pleased to return hard-earned dollars to the groups and individuals who did not get what they paid for," Attorney General Morrisey said. "In just a short time, our staff was able to secure more than \$22,000 in refunds for those affected. This litigation emphasizes how seriously we take consumer protection and holding companies accountable for delivering promises made."

The mailings return \$10,382 to Kermit Area School, \$7,500 to Crum Middle School and \$4,800 split between two private citizens....

- **Original Press Release:** <http://mailchi.mp/wvago/wva-ag-returns-more-than-22k-to-families-schools-wronged-by-charter-bus-company?e=5699e8e411>

September 22, 2017

### **Attorney General Morrisey Holds Area Contractor Accountable With Threat of Jail Time**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced Friday his office recently secured a court order holding an area contractor in contempt with the threat of jail time should the contractor continue his failure to comply with an agreement to stop home improvement contracting and pay more than \$24,500 in fines and restitution.

The contempt order requires Roger Province to cease contracting with consumers for home improvement services and make payments to the Attorney General's Office. Failure to abide by those terms will result in a six-month jail sentence.

"Contractors must adhere to the rule of law and respect orders of the court," Attorney General Morrisey said. "This case underscores our commitment toward holding bad actors accountable."

The Attorney General's Office sought the contempt order in a petition filed this summer against Province. The defendant did business under his own name and a host of others – Roger's Home...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://mailchi.mp/wvago/wva-ag-holds-area-contractor-accountable-with-threat-of-jail-time?e=5699e8e411>

## Multistate Cases

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### Investigation into the Nationwide Opioid Epidemic

**Date:** September 19, 2017

**Details:** A coalition of State Attorney General urging health insurance companies to examine financial incentives that contributed to the opioid epidemic.

*Letter:*

[http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/Attorney\\_General\\_Balderas\\_Joins\\_37\\_States\\_\\_Territories\\_in\\_Fight\\_against\\_Opioid\\_Incentives.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/Attorney_General_Balderas_Joins_37_States__Territories_in_Fight_against_Opioid_Incentives.pdf)

**States include:**

- |                |                    |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Alabama     | 13. Maine          | 25. Rhode Island   |
| 2. Arkansas    | 14. Massachusetts  | 26. South Carolina |
| 3. California  | 15. Michigan       | 27. South Dakota   |
| 4. Colorado    | 16. Mississippi    | 28. Tennessee      |
| 5. Connecticut | 17. Nevada         | 29. Texas          |
| 6. Florida     | 18. New Hampshire  | 30. Utah           |
| 7. Georgia     | 19. New Mexico     | 31. Vermont        |
| 8. Hawaii      | 20. New York       | 32. Virginia       |
| 9. Illinois    | 21. North Carolina | 33. West Virginia  |
| 10. Indiana    | 22. North Dakota   | 34. Wisconsin      |
| 11. Iowa       | 23. Oregon         |                    |
| 12. Kansas     | 24. Pennsylvania   |                    |

*Is a state missing? We don't have a press release in our database. Please contact us so it can be included. Thank you.*

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### Bipartisan investigation into the massive Equifax data breach

**Date:** September 15, 2017

**Details:** Attorneys general around the country joined in a letter to credit reporting firm Equifax requesting that it disable links for enrollment in fee-based credit monitoring service in the wake of the massive data breach impacting 143 million people.



Connecticut is co-leading the states' investigation with the attorneys general from Illinois, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia; the investigation was launched as soon as Equifax publicly disclosed the breach last week. Equifax is offering free credit monitoring services in response to the breach, but the attorneys general today objected to Equifax "seemingly using its own data breach as an opportunity to sell services to breach victims," they wrote.

*Example Press Release: <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?Q=596288&A=2341>*

*Letter:*

*[http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/press\\_releases/2017/20170915\\_equifaxlettertocounsel.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/press_releases/2017/20170915_equifaxlettertocounsel.pdf)*

**Fed Agency:** Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

**States include:**

- |                       |                         |                           |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>Alabama</i>     | 9. <i>Missouri</i>      | 17. <i>Rhode Island</i>   |
| 2. <i>Arizona</i>     | 10. <i>Montana</i>      | 18. <i>South Carolina</i> |
| 3. <i>Georgia</i>     | 11. <i>Nebraska</i>     | 19. <i>South Dakota</i>   |
| 4. <i>Kansas</i>      | 12. <i>New Jersey</i>   | 20. <i>Virginia</i>       |
| 5. <i>Kentucky</i>    | 13. <i>New Mexico</i>   | 21. <i>West Virginia</i>  |
| 6. <i>Louisiana</i>   | 14. <i>North Dakota</i> | 22. <i>Wisconsin</i>      |
| 7. <i>Michigan</i>    | 15. <i>Oklahoma</i>     |                           |
| 8. <i>Mississippi</i> | 16. <i>Pennsylvania</i> |                           |

*Is a state missing? We don't have a press release in our database. Please contact us so it can be included. Thank you.*

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## Settlement with Lenovo over Adware

**Date:** September 6, 2017

**Details:** Under the settlement, Lenovo resolves allegations that it shipped some of its laptops preloaded with adware that compromised security protections in order to deliver ads to Arizona consumers. Those compromised security protections allegedly made consumers' personal information vulnerable to hackers. The settlement was negotiated in coordination with the Federal Trade Commission.

In August 2014, North Carolina-based Lenovo began selling certain laptop computers that contained pre-installed adware called VisualDiscovery, which was created by the company Superfish, Inc. VisualDiscovery purportedly delivered pop-up ads to consumers of similar looking products sold by Superfish retail partners whenever a customer's mouse hovered over the image of a product on a shopping website. The states claim that VisualDiscovery displayed a one-time pop-up window the first time

consumers visited a shopping website. Unless consumers opted out, VisualDiscovery would be enabled on their computers.

The states allege that Lenovo's failure to disclose the presence of VisualDiscovery on its computers, its failure to warn consumers that the software created a security vulnerability, and its inadequate opt-out procedure violated Arizona consumer protection laws.

Lenovo stopped shipping laptops with VisualDiscovery pre-installed in February 2015, though the states allege that some laptops with the software were still being sold by various retail outlets as late as June 2015.

In addition, the settlement requires Lenovo to receive a consumer's affirmative consent to using the software on their device and to provide a reasonable and effective means for consumers to opt-out, disable or remove the software.

*Example Press Release:*

[http://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_09/20170905.html](http://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_09/20170905.html)

*Complaint and Settlement Document:*

[http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/press\\_releases/2017/20170905\\_lenovo\\_complaint\\_multistate\\_settlement.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/press_releases/2017/20170905_lenovo_complaint_multistate_settlement.pdf)

**Fed Agency:** Federal Trade Commission

**States include:**

- |                       |                          |                           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>1. Arizona</i>     | <i>8. Iowa</i>           | <i>15. New York</i>       |
| <i>2. Arkansas</i>    | <i>9. Kansas</i>         | <i>16. North Carolina</i> |
| <i>3. California</i>  | <i>10. Maine</i>         | <i>17. Pennsylvania</i>   |
| <i>4. Connecticut</i> | <i>11. Nebraska</i>      | <i>18. Rhode Island</i>   |
| <i>5. Florida</i>     | <i>12. Nevada</i>        | <i>19. Vermont</i>        |
| <i>6. Idaho</i>       | <i>13. New Hampshire</i> |                           |
| <i>7. Illinois</i>    | <i>14. New Jersey</i>    |                           |

*Is a state missing? We don't have a press release in our database. Please contact us so it can be included. Thank you.*

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**Legal Action to Protect Fuel Efficiency Standards**

**Date:** September 11, 2017

**Details:** Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced today that he filed a lawsuit against the Trump Administration to protect the environment by enforcing a rule that promotes stricter federal fuel efficiency standards.

Shapiro joined the Attorneys General from New York, California, Vermont and Maryland and filed an action for the illegal delay of a rule that encourages automakers to produce vehicle fleets that meet or exceed federal fuel efficiency standards.

Under a rule put in place by the Obama Administration, penalties on automakers whose vehicle fleets do not meet minimum fuel efficiency standards were set to increase by \$8.50 per tenth of a mile per gallon in July 2017. The rule was issued in accordance with the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act passed by Congress and signed by the President in 2015. In July, the Trump Administration announced it was delaying the rule indefinitely. The delay violates both the Administrative Procedure Act and the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 2015.

*Example Press Release:*

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media\\_and\\_Resources/Press\\_Releases/Press\\_Release/?pid=3958](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3958)

*Lawsuit:* [http://paofficeofattorneygeneral.pr-](http://paofficeofattorneygeneral.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8263A%26JDG%3c%3a7%403869%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=IN&RI=711752&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=3015&Action=Follow+Link)

[optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8263A%26JDG%3c%3a7%403869%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=IN&RI=711752&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=3015&Action=Follow+Link](http://paofficeofattorneygeneral.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8263A%26JDG%3c%3a7%403869%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=IN&RI=711752&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=3015&Action=Follow+Link)

**States:** California, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont

## Medicaid Fraud

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### ARKANSAS

September 07, 2017

#### **Attorneys General Reach \$13.4 Million Settlement with U.S. Bioservices Pharmacy**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge has reached an agreement to settle allegations against U.S. Bioservices Corporation, a specialty pharmacy headquartered in Frisco, Texas.

The settlement resolves allegations that the corporation knowingly recommended the drug Exjade to Medicaid patients in exchange for kickbacks from Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation which markets the drug. Under the settlement, U.S. Bioservices has agreed to pay \$13.4 million to the United States and over thirty states. Arkansas will receive \$29,046 under the settlement.

“Another company is being held accountable for its greedy mentality to encourage the use of the drug Exjade,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “There is no place for threatening tactics especially in the health care marketplace. The health and well-being of the patient must be paramount.”

Exjade was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in late 2005 for the treatment of chronic iron overload due to blood transfusions. When Novartis launched Exjade, it...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/attorneys-general-reach-13.4-million-settlement-with-u.s-bioservices-pharmacy/>

September 07, 2017

#### **Rutledge Announces Arrest of Benton Woman for Medicaid Fraud**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the arrest of a Saline County woman.

Lindsey Nevels, 33, of Benton, was arrested by the Saline County Sheriff’s office. Her bond was set at \$10,000 and she was processed and released from the Saline County Jail. She is charged with one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class B felony for the misrepresentation of material facts that resulted in the Arkansas Medicaid Program incorrectly expending benefits totaling \$12,165. In addition, Nevels is charged with one count of abuse of an endangered or impaired person, a Class B felony where she misappropriated \$3,285.

Medicaid fraud occurs when providers use the Medicaid program to obtain money to which they are not entitled. To report Medicaid fraud or abuse or neglect in residential care facilities, contact the Attorney General’s Medicaid fraud hotline at (866) 810-0016 or [oag@arkansasag.gov](mailto:oag@arkansasag.gov). ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-announces-arrest-of-benton-woman-for-medicaid-fraud/>

September 12, 2017

### **Rutledge Announces Conviction of Randolph County Woman for Medicaid Fraud**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Pocahontas woman for Medicaid fraud. Shirley Diane Contreras pleaded guilty in Pulaski County Circuit Court and was sentenced to three years of probation and was ordered to pay \$5,514.04 in restitution and \$2,500.00 in fines plus court costs. Contreras paid \$3,000 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund today and will pay the remaining balance at a rate of \$418 per month until paid in full.

“Shirley Contreras repeatedly made fraudulent claims, stealing thousands from the Medicaid Trust fund,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The care she claimed to have provided but never did harmed vulnerable Arkansans who were dependent on her for assistance. My staff of attorneys and investigators will continue to investigate and prosecute this fraud across the state.”

Contreras, 48, of Pocahontas pleaded guilty to Theft by Deception, a Class C felony. She was...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-announces-conviction-of-randolph-county-woman-for-medicaid-fraud/>

September 22, 2017

### **Rutledge Announces Arrest of Lake Village Woman for Medicaid Fraud**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the arrest of a Chicot County woman.

Eva Sykes, 61, of Lake Village, was arrested by agents with the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and transported to the Pulaski County Jail. She is charged with one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class B felony. She is accused of fraudulently retaining Medicaid payments for services not rendered, totaling \$47,596.40 in February 2015.

Medicaid fraud occurs when providers use the Medicaid program to obtain money to which they are not entitled. To report Medicaid fraud or abuse or neglect in residential care facilities, contact the Attorney General’s Medicaid fraud hotline at (866) 810-0016 or [oag@arkansasag.gov](mailto:oag@arkansasag.gov). ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-announces-arrest-of-lake-village-woman-for-medicaid-fraud/>

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## CONNECTICUT

September 07, 2017

### **Conn. Reaches State-Federal Settlement with Hartford Dispensary to Resolve False Claims Act Allegations**

The Hartford Dispensary will pay \$627,000 through a federal-state settlement to resolve allegations that it violated the False Claims Act by falsely certifying to federal and state officials

that it had a current medical director that was performing his duties in accordance with federal and state law, Attorney General George Jepsen and state Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby said today.

In 2014, the Office of the Attorney General commenced an investigation after a whistleblower complaint about the Hartford Dispensary, a private nonprofit behavioral health organization; the investigation was followed by a qui tam lawsuit alleging various violations of the state and federal False Claims Act. The state's investigation focused on services that Hartford Dispensary provides as an opioid treatment program – primarily methadone and detoxification services. Hartford Dispensary has been enrolled as an outpatient medication-assisted treatment provider in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP) – Connecticut's Medicaid program...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?Q=596054&A=2341>

September 21, 2017

### **State Files False Claims Act Lawsuit against Fairfield Dentist**

Attorney General George Jepsen and state Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby today announced that the state has filed a False Claims Act lawsuit against a Fairfield dentist alleging that he engaged in a long-term, pervasive scheme to defraud the state's Medicaid program.

Dr. Aram Agadjanian, also known as Aram Yuri Agadzanov, a resident of Fairfield, is a licensed dentist and was enrolled as a dental provider in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP) – the state's Medicaid program – from May 2009 to May 2015.

Dr. Agadjanian primarily saw indigent and elderly Medicaid patients who were residents at assisted living facilities in Connecticut. The state's complaint alleges that, from April 2014 to April 2015, Dr. Agadjanian billed the state's Medicaid program more than \$900,000 for dental services allegedly provided to CMAP recipients, but those services were never actually performed. The state alleges that Dr. Agadjanian billed for dental...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?Q=596420&A=2341>

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## FLORIDA

September 01, 2017

### **Lee County Man Found Guilty of Exploitation of an Elderly Person**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit today announced the conviction of a Lee County man for exploiting an elderly relative residing in a nursing home. A Lee County jury found Ryan Todd Powers, 41, guilty on four counts of first degree exploitation involving an elderly person.

The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit's Patient Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Team investigated this case and revealed Powers unlawfully obtained funds from an elderly relative suffering from physical limitations. In order to manage the relative's affairs, Powers obtained a durable power

of attorney on behalf of the victim. Using the power of attorney, Powers misappropriated the victim's funds and property for purposes other than the relative's benefit. The State Attorney's Office for the 20th Judicial Circuit prosecuted the case. The sentencing date is set for Oct. 2, 2017. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/3FADA5FA1E859BBA8525818E00691B8E>

September 06, 2017

**Escambia County Resident Arrested for Exploitation**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Escambia County Sheriff's Office today arrested a woman for exploiting an elderly person. According to a MFCU investigation, Escambia County resident Sonya Sharika Blocker, 44, stole thousands of dollars from an elderly victim residing in a nursing home. Acting on a referral by Department of Children and Families, MFCU investigators worked with the Social Security Administration and discovered that Blocker stole more than \$17,000 from the victim. Blocker faces one count of exploitation of an elderly person, second-degree felony. If convicted, Blocker faces up to 15 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines. The Florida Attorney General's Office will prosecute the case through an agreement with the State Attorney's Office in the First Judicial Circuit.

The Florida Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program. Additionally, the...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/4FE1750DA42617EF85258193005211BF>

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## IDAHO

September 22, 2017

**Idaho to Receive \$438,000 in Settlement with Drugmaker Mylan Over EpiPen**

(Boise) - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden announced today that Idaho has agreed to join the federal government and other states in settling allegations against Mylan Inc. and its subsidiary, Mylan Specialty L.P. The settlement resolves allegations that Mylan knowingly underpaid rebates owed to the Medicaid program for the drugs EpiPen and EpiPen Jr. dispensed to Medicaid beneficiaries.

The settlement requires Mylan to pay \$465 million. The states' share is nearly \$214 million. Idaho's portion of the settlement totals \$438,003.

The settlement resolves allegations that from July 29, 2010 to March 31, 2017, Mylan submitted false statements to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, that incorrectly classified EpiPen as a "noninnovator multiple source" drug, as opposed to a "single

source” or “innovator multiple source” drug, as those terms are defined in the Rebate Statute and Rebate Agreement. Mylan also did not report a Best Price to CMS for EpiPen, as...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr\\_09222017.html](http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr_09222017.html)

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## INDIANA

September 14, 2017

### **Indiana reaches Medicaid fraud settlement with pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, Inc.**

INDIANAPOLIS -Attorney General Curtis Hill today announced that Indiana reached an agreement in principle with Novo Nordisk, Inc. – a pharmaceutical company known for insulin manufacturing.

The signed agreement settles allegations that Novo Nordisk failed to comply with the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) required Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) for the company’s Type II diabetes medication Victoza.

When Victoza was approved in 2010, the FDA required REMS to lessen the potential risk of a rare form of cancer in humans who take the drug. The cancer is called Medullary Thyroid Carcinoma (MTC) and the REMS required that Novo Nordisk included information about Victoza and the potential risk of MTC to physicians.

Any failure to comply with the REMS such as failure to accurately communicate potential risks means the drug is misbranded, according to the law. Novo Nordisk’s failure to do so resulted in a \$46.5 million settlement with the federal government...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?view=EventDetails&eventidn=268984&information\\_id=274390&type=&syndicate=syndicate](http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?view=EventDetails&eventidn=268984&information_id=274390&type=&syndicate=syndicate)

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## IOWA

September 25, 2017

### **Iowa Settles with Mylan for Overcharging Taxpayers by Underpaying EpiPen Government Rebates**

DES MOINES – Attorney General Tom Miller this month signed onto a \$465 million joint federal-multistate settlement with drugmaker Mylan Inc. and a subsidiary to resolve allegations that Mylan knowingly overcharged taxpayers for the life-saving allergy injection drugs EpiPen and EpiPen Jr. dispensed to Medicaid beneficiaries.

The final settlement, which includes a \$1.5 million payment to Iowa, is tied to an agreement in principle announced August 17 by the U.S. Department of Justice to resolve a federal False Claims Act case.

The Pennsylvania-based company manufactures, markets and sells pharmaceuticals through its wholly-owned subsidiaries, including Mylan Specialty, which owns the exclusive rights to sell EpiPen in the United States.



“The facts of case may be complicated, but the simple result is we’re holding Mylan accountable for deceiving our state’s Medicaid program in how the company charged for EpiPens,” Miller said. “While we allege Mylan overcharged the government, it really boils down to Mylan taking...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/iowa-settles-with-mylan-for-overcharging-taxpayers-by-underpaying-epipen-government-rebates/>

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## KANSAS

September 01, 2017

### **Olathe woman pleads guilty to Medicaid fraud, agrees to repay more than \$6,400**

OLATHE – (September 1, 2017) – An Olathe woman pleaded guilty yesterday to Medicaid fraud, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Connie Ferreira, 61, pleaded guilty to one felony count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program. Ferreira agreed to pay \$6,460.14 in restitution to the Kansas Medicaid program. Johnson County District Court Judge Timothy McCarthy accepted the plea and scheduled sentencing for November 9 at 9 a.m.

An investigation revealed that Ferreira billed Medicaid for in-home services provided as a personal care attendant to an eligible Medicaid recipient when he was out of the home. As a personal care attendant, Ferreira was to provide home care services including bathing, meal preparation and housekeeping. Ferreira was accused of billing 760 hours between May 2012 and February 2014 for in-home services even though the recipient was out of the home. Assistant Attorney General Alma Heckler of Schmidt’s office prosecuted the case. The...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/01/olathe-woman-pleads-guilty-to-medicaid-fraud-agrees-to-repay-more-than-\\$6-400](https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/01/olathe-woman-pleads-guilty-to-medicaid-fraud-agrees-to-repay-more-than-$6-400)

September 07, 2017

### **Douglas County woman ordered to repay more than \$11,000 for Medicaid fraud**

LAWRENCE – (September 7, 2017) – A Douglas County woman was ordered this week to repay more than \$11,000 to the Kansas Medicaid Program after pleading guilty to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Marquita Diane Hutcherson, 44, pleaded guilty in July in Douglas County District Court to one count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program, one count of theft and one count of unlawful acts concerning computers. On Tuesday, Judge B. Kay Huff ordered Hutcherson to repay \$11,717.29 to the Kansas Medicaid Program. Judge Huff also sentenced Hutcherson to 36 months probation with an underlying jail sentence of 18 months. Convictions such as this one may also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program.

An investigation revealed that Hutcherson billed Medicaid for services provided as a personal

care attendant for a beneficiary...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/07/douglas-county-woman-ordered-to-repay-more-than-\\$11-000-for-medicaid-fraud](https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/07/douglas-county-woman-ordered-to-repay-more-than-$11-000-for-medicaid-fraud)

September 29, 2017

### **Kansas City man ordered to repay \$13,000 for Medicaid fraud**

TOPEKA – (September 29, 2017) – A Kansas City, Kan., man was ordered today to repay more than \$13,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after being found guilty of Medicaid fraud, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Jasmon Watson, 33, was found guilty in March of one count of Medicaid fraud by a Wyandotte County jury. Judge Bill L. Klapper today ordered Watson to repay \$13,077.22 to the Kansas Medicaid Program. Judge Klapper also sentenced Watson to 12 months of probation with an underlying sentence of five months in the Kansas Department of Corrections. Convictions such as this one may also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program.

An investigation revealed that Watson billed Medicaid for providing home care based services to individuals with traumatic brain injuries during the same hours he was working at another job. The crimes...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/29/kansas-city-man-ordered-to-repay-\\$13-000-for-medicaid-fraud](https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/29/kansas-city-man-ordered-to-repay-$13-000-for-medicaid-fraud)

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## KENTUCKY

September 26, 2017

### **Beshear Partnering with St. Agnes Catholic Community to Protect Seniors from Scams**

FRANKFORT, KY. (Sept. 26, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear and his Office of Senior Protection and Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse are joining the St. Agnes Catholic Community at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 26 for an event aimed at protecting local congregations and the communities they serve from con artists and the latest scams.

The event, located at the Parrish Center in the rear of St. Agnes School at 1920 Newburg Road in Louisville, is part of Beshear’s 2017 Interfaith Travel Series Scam Alerts that has hosted dozens of events with senior ministries across the state.

Beshear launched Scam Alerts last year as the state’s first direct messaging service that notifies Kentuckians of financial schemes by con artists to steal money or a person’s identification. He announced the travel series in February to collaborate with the faith-based community and their senior ministries.

“One of my top priorities is to protect Kentucky...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=406>

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## LOUISIANA

September 07, 2017

### **Welfare Recipient Fraud Targeted in Multi-State Request by Louisiana and Kansas AG's**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry and Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt are leading a multi-state effort to obtain the authority to investigate and prosecute cases of Medicaid beneficiary fraud.

“All welfare fraud needs to be found and ended,” said General Landry. “My Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) has been recognized for their diligent success in uncovering and prosecuting provider fraud. We need the authority to bring beneficiary fraudsters to justice and further save Louisiana taxpayers’ hard-earned money.”

With state MFCU’s currently restricted in their ability to target recipient fraud, the Landry-Schmidt coalition has serious concerns about the ongoing impact Medicaid beneficiary fraud has on taxpayers. Landry cites John Bel Edwards’ expansion of Medicaid as adding over 436,375 new beneficiaries and drastically increasing the potential for fraud.

In a letter to U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price – the Attorneys General ask for the authority to go...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3450?catID=5>

September 12, 2017

### **Nearly \$7M in EpiPen Settlement Funding Headed to Louisiana**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Attorney General Jeff Landry today announced that Louisiana has joined a multi-state settlement with Mylan Inc. that resolves allegations the drug manufacturer knowingly overcharged taxpayers for EpiPen® and EpiPen Jr.® dispensed to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Per the agreement, Mylan will pay \$465 million to the federal government and the states. Louisiana’s portion is \$6,922,152.05 – money that General Landry said will go toward replenishing the State’s Medicaid program.

“As I have said before, all welfare fraud needs to be found and ended. From providers to beneficiaries, those who defraud our State’s Medicaid welfare program steal our taxpayers’ money and jeopardize care for our most vulnerable,” said General Landry. “People and businesses who deceive the hard-working taxpayers of Louisiana should be held accountable for their actions. I will do all that I legally can to ensure Medicaid fraudsters are brought to justice.”

From July 29, 2010 to March 31, 2017,...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3452?catID=5>

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## MISSOURI

September 13, 2017

### **AG Hawley Announces Medicaid Fraud Recoveries of More Than \$2.6 Million Dollars**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley today announced that in the first six months of 2017, his office has recovered over \$2.6 million in fraudulent Medicaid payments. In partnership with other State Attorneys General, the National Association of Medicaid Fraud Control Units, and the United States Attorney’s Office, Hawley reached settlement agreements with six health care providers: CareCore National, LLC; Walgreens Co.; Forest Laboratories LLC, Forest Pharmaceuticals Inc. (Forest); IPC Healthcare Inc., f/k/a IPC The Hospitalists Inc. (IPC); Omnicare Inc.; and Shire Holdings US AG, Shire Pharmaceutical LLC, Shire Regenerative Medicine LLC (Shire).

“Medicaid fraud will not be tolerated in Missouri,” Hawley said. “My office is firm in its commitment to protect taxpayer money and ensure that it is used properly.”

Attorney General Hawley encourages individuals to report suspected Medicaid fraud to his office. State law provides that a whistleblower may be entitled to 10 percent of any...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-medicaid-fraud-recoveries-of-more-than-2.6-million-dollars>

September 28, 2017

### **AG Hawley Announces Medicaid Fraud Settlement with Mylan Inc.**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Josh Hawley announced that Missouri will receive over \$3.1 million as part of a \$465 million settlement against Mylan Inc. This settlement resolves allegations that Mylan knowingly underpaid rebates owed to Missouri’s Medicaid program for the sales of EpiPen and EpiPen Jr.

The case alleged that from July 29, 2010 to March 31, 2017, Mylan submitted false statements to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that incorrectly classified EpiPen as a “non-innovator multiple source” drug, as opposed to a “single source” or “innovator multiple source” drug, as those terms are defined in the Rebate Statute and Rebate Agreement. Mylan also did not report a Best Price to CMS for EpiPen, which it was required to do for all “single source” and “innovator multiple source” drugs. As a result, Mylan submitted or caused to be submitted false statements to CMS relating to EpiPen for...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-medicaid-fraud-settlement-with-mylan-inc> -

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## VERMONT

September 27, 2017

### **Barre Town Man Sentenced for Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult, Medicaid Fraud, False Pretenses, and False Information to Law Enforcement**

Attorney General Thomas J. Donovan announced today that Cody LaFountain, age 34, of Barre

Town, Vermont, was sentenced to 50 months to 15 years incarceration on September 26, 2017, in Vermont Superior Court for Washington County on one felony count of Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult with Serious Bodily Injury/Death resulting, one count of Medicaid Fraud, one misdemeanor count of False Pretenses, one misdemeanor count of Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult, and one count of False Information to Law Enforcement. Mr. LaFountain had previously entered a nolo contendere plea on the felony charge of Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult with Serious Bodily Injury, and guilty pleas on the remaining counts on May 26, 2017. Mr. LaFountain was the shared living provider for the disabled adult through a program managed by the Community Access Program of Rutland Mental Health Services. Mr. LaFountain failed to provide proper supervision to the disabled individual, who...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/barre-town-man-sentenced-for-neglect-of-a-vulnerable-adult-medicaid-fraud-false-pretenses-and-false-information-to-law-enforcement.php>

## Consumer Advocacy

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### Hurricane & Natural Disaster Fraud and Scam Alerts

Alabama: Price Gouging <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1127>

Alaska: Flooded Automobiles [http://law.alaska.gov/press/consumer\\_alerts/2017/0917-FloodedAuto.html](http://law.alaska.gov/press/consumer_alerts/2017/0917-FloodedAuto.html)

California: Sham Charities <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-issues-consumer-alert-sham-charities-following>

Price Gouging <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-issues-consumer-alert-price-gouging-following-state-1>

Florida: Price Gouging

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/1D51FF0BD318081685258192000368AF>

Scams and looting

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/9364CF40A67F24F4852581980059C9EB>

Georgia: Scams <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-09-11/attorney-general-chris-carr-cautions-georgians-about-hurricane-relief>

Flooded Automobiles <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-09-20/consumer-alert-beware-flood-damaged-vehicles-being-sold-wake-recent-storms>

Kansas: Gasoline prices <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/01/lt.-gov.-jeff-colyer-and-ag-derek-schmidt-issue-joint-statement-on-gasoline-price-increases-after-hurricane-harvey>

Louisiana: Flooded Automobiles <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3454?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

Maine: Flooded Automobiles <http://www.maine.gov/ag/news/article.shtml?id=767016>

Maryland: Scams <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/090117.pdf>

Flooded Automobiles <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/091917.pdf>

Mississippi: Flooded Automobiles <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/ag-hood-warns-drivers-of-resale-on-flood-damaged-vehicles/>

Missouri: Fraudulent Charities <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-warns-missouri-consumers-about-fraudulent-charities>

New York : Price Gouging <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-warns-against-gasoline-price-gouging-following-hurricane-harvey>

Fraudulent Charities <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-reminds-new-yorkers-charitable-giving-tips-response-hurricane-irma> and <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-reminds-new-yorkers-charitable-giving-tips-response-hurricane-maria>

Ohio: Fraudulent Charities <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/September-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Offers-Ohioans-Giving-Tips>

Oklahoma: Fraudulent Charities

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=35402](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=35402)

Flooded Automobiles

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=35863](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=35863)

South Carolina: Price Gouging <http://www.scag.gov/archives/33190>

Texas: Fraudulent Charities <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-beware-of-hurricane-harvey-charity-scams>

Repair and Clean up Scams <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-issues-consumer-alert-beware-of-hurricane-harvey-repair-and-clean>

Flooded Automobiles <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-issues-consumer-alert-beware-of-buying-flood-damaged-vehicles-in>

West Virginia: Flooded Automobiles <http://mailchi.mp/wvago/wva-ag-to-car-buyers-watch-for-flooded-cars?e=5699e8e411>

*Is a state missing? We don't have a press release in our database. Please contact us so it can be included. Thank you.*

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Advocacy related to Equifax Data Breach

Alabama: <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1133>

Alaska: [http://law.alaska.gov/press/consumer\\_alerts/2017/0917-Equifax.html](http://law.alaska.gov/press/consumer_alerts/2017/0917-Equifax.html)

Arkansas: <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-issues-urgent-warning-on-equifax-and-con-artists/>

California: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-issues-consumer-alert-following-equifax-data-breach> and <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-continues-efforts-address-equifax-data-breach-urges>

Connecticut: <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?Q=596288&A=2341>

Colorado: <https://coag.gov/press-room/press-releases/09-14-17>

Delaware: <http://news.delaware.gov/2017/09/12/equifax/>

District of Columbia: <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-asks-equifax-disable-fee-based-monitoring-services-reimburse-fees>

Florida:

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/C3206F71C99EB8B9852581A00057492D>

Georgia: <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-09-13/consumer-alert-first-thing-do-wake-recent-data-breach> and <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-09-26/consumer-alert-additional-ways-protect-yourself-following-equifax-data>

Idaho: [http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr\\_09112017.html](http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr_09112017.html)

Illinois: [http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_09/20170908.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_09/20170908.html)

Indiana:

[http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?view=EventDetails&eventidn=268778&information\\_id=274209&type=&syndicate=syndicate](http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?view=EventDetails&eventidn=268778&information_id=274209&type=&syndicate=syndicate)

Iowa: <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/consumer-alert-miller-iowans-should-act-now-following-massive-equifax-security-breach/>

Kansas: <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/12/consumer-alert-ag-derek-schmidt-offers-consumer-tips-following-equifax-data-breach-announcement> and <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/09/22/ag-derek-schmidt-update-on-equifax-data-breach>

Kentucky: <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=396> and <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=405>

Louisiana: <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3460?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

Maryland: <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/090817.pdf> and <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/092917.pdf>

Massachusetts: <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-08-equifax-data-breach.html> and <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-09-25-data-breach-bill.html>

Minnesota: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Consumer/Publications/EquifaxDataBreach.asp>

Mississippi: <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/ag-hood-warns-consumers-of-scam-websites-imitating-as-equifax/>

Montana: <https://dojmt.gov/montana-consumers-alerted-equifax-data-breach/>

Nebraska: <https://ago.nebraska.gov/news/nebraskans-encouraged-protect-themselves-following-equifax-breach>

Nevada:

[http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney\\_General\\_Laxalt\\_Addresses\\_Consumer\\_Concerns\\_Surrounding\\_Equifax\\_Data\\_Breach\\_Affecting\\_1\\_2\\_Million\\_Nevadans](http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Addresses_Consumer_Concerns_Surrounding_Equifax_Data_Breach_Affecting_1_2_Million_Nevadans)

New Hampshire: <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170908-equifax.htm>

New Mexico:

[http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG\\_Balderas\\_Warns\\_New\\_Mexicans\\_of\\_Massive\\_Equifax\\_Data\\_Breach.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG_Balderas_Warns_New_Mexicans_of_Massive_Equifax_Data_Breach.pdf) and

[http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/Balderas\\_Warns\\_of\\_Equifax\\_Security\\_Breach\\_Scam.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/Balderas_Warns_of_Equifax_Security_Breach_Scam.pdf)

New York: <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-warns-cyberattacks-following-equifax-data-breach>

North Carolina: <http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/Attorney-General-Stein-Takes-Action-on-Behalf-of-5.aspx>

North Dakota: <https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/news/equifax-security-breach>

Ohio: <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/September-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Offers-Consumer-Tips-Follo> and <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/September-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Offers-Updated-Information>

Oklahoma:

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=35699](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=35699)

Oregon: <https://www.doj.state.or.us/media-home/news-media-releases/equifax-data-breach-need-know/>

Rhode Island: <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/31380>

South Dakota: <http://atg.sd.gov/OurOffice/Media/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=1858> and <http://atg.sd.gov/OurOffice/Media/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=1872>

Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/news/53179> and <https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/news/53380>

Texas: <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-issues-consumer-alert-following-equifax-data-breach-reportedly-af>

Vermont: <http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/statement-of-attorney-general-tj-donovan-update-to-vermonters-on-equifax-data-breach.php>



Virginia: <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1029-september-8-2017-ag-herring-warns-more-than-4-million-virginians-of-equifax-breach-impact>

Washington: <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/consumer-alert-advice-how-cope-equifax-data-breach>

West Virginia: <http://mailchi.mp/wvago/wva-ag-warns-consumers-of-equifax-impostor-scam?e=5699e8e411> and

*Is a state missing? We don't have a press release in our database. Please contact us so it can be included. Thank you.*

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## Protections for Student Borrowers

**Details:** The letter to Secretary DeVos finds three main faults with the Department of Education's decision to end its cooperation with the CFPB and the August 31st letter announcing that decision:

The Department falsely asserted it has exclusive jurisdiction over companies that service federal student loans when, in fact, student loan servicers are under the jurisdiction of the CFPB, Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice, state attorneys general and other law enforcement agencies.

The Department of Education's decision is the latest in a series of actions that strip critical protections for millions of students and families repaying student loans.

The Department of Education misrepresents the strong work done by the CFPB on behalf of students and families across the country.

Press Release: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-criticizes-education-secretary-devos-continuing-roll>

States include:

1. *California*
2. *Connecticut*
3. *Delaware*
4. *Hawai'i*
5. *Illinois*
6. *Iowa*
7. *Kentucky*
8. *Maine*
9. *Maryland*
10. *Massachusetts*
11. *Minnesota*
12. *New York*
13. *North Carolina*
14. *Oregon*
15. *Pennsylvania*
16. *Rhode Island*
17. *Vermont*
18. *Virginia*
19. *Washington*
20. *the District of Columbia.*

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## CALIFORNIA

September 18, 2017

### **Attorney General Becerra: Valero's Abandoned Takeover of Independent Petroleum Distributor Is Welcome News for Californians and Competition**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement after Valero Energy Corporation and Valero Energy Partners LP (“Valero”) announced that they are abandoning their plans to take over the last independent petroleum distribution terminal in Martinez, California, from Plains All American Pipeline, LP. In *State of California v. Valero Energy Corporation*, Attorney General Becerra alleged that this proposed acquisition raised significant anti-competitive concerns and could result in higher gas prices at the pump for Californians:

“Today’s announcement is welcome news for all Californians, and it should send a strong message to the public: the California Department of Justice is committed to protecting consumers and competition.

“At the California Department of Justice, it’s our responsibility to combat threats to our state’s thriving and competitive marketplace. That’s why we took on this proposed acquisition. Simply put, we strongly believed that Valero's action could have suffocated open competition and...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-valero%E2%80%99s-abandoned-takeover-independent-petroleum>

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## DELAWARE

September 08, 2017

### **Delaware DOJ Consumer Protection Unit Selected To Host Law Enforcement Training On Financial Exploitation Of Seniors**

The Delaware Department of Justice Consumer Protection Unit has been selected as one of 8 jurisdictions around the country to host a training for law enforcement on preventing, investigating and prosecuting financial exploitation of senior citizens.

The training, put on by the National White Collar Crime Center and the United States Department of Justice, will allow for 100 area law enforcement officers to learn effective ways to respond to complex elder fraud cases. The training is expected to be held in Wilmington in April 2018.

“A primary goal of the Delaware Department of Justice is to protect Delawareans from harm, and seniors are one of our most valuable yet most vulnerable populations,” said Attorney

General Matt Denn. “Those who prey on the elderly need to be caught and punished for their crimes, so I’m honored and proud that we have been selected to provide local law enforcement with this opportunity. I want...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://news.delaware.gov/2017/09/08/lefe/>

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## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 26, 2017

### **Attorney General Racine Applauds New Initiatives by CVS Health to Counteract Opioid Crisis**

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today welcomed an announcement by CVS Health that the company is expanding its efforts to fight opioid addiction and encouraged other companies to undertake similar efforts.

“Fighting the opioid crisis in the District and across the country requires all hands on deck, and I welcome CVS Health investing more resources in this effort,” Attorney General Racine said. “In particular, I’m thankful that they’ve chosen locations in the District where residents can dispose of unused prescription painkillers and other prescription drugs safely. This is a crucial tool in ensuring that dangerous and addictive drugs don’t get into the wrong hands, and it’s important for government and private entities alike to join the fight to protect our communities from opioid addiction.”

In the District, the efforts include installing three new “drop box” locations for CVS-hosted prescription drug take back facilities. They are stationed at 24-hour...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-applauds-new-initiatives-cvs-health-counteract-opioid-crisis>

September 30, 2017

### **In Testimony to Public Service Commission, Attorney General Racine Opposes Washington Gas Merger Plan**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Last night, Attorney General Karl A. Racine filed official testimony on behalf of witnesses for the District of Columbia with the District’s Public Service Commission regarding the proposed Washington Gas merger. The testimony opposes an application by AltaGas, a Canadian energy holding company, to acquire WGLH, the owner of Washington Gas, the District’s distribution gas utility.

Attorney General Racine said the proposed acquisition would not be in the public interest. “The proposed merger gives District consumers few tangible benefits,” Attorney General Racine said. “We do not believe this merger would be in the public interest; therefore, we oppose it.” The District’s testimony opposing the acquisition is available here ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/testimony-public-service-commission-attorney-general-racine-opposes-washington-gas-merger>

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## MAINE

September 14, 2017

### **Attorney General Janet Mills joined the University of Maine System in announcing the expansion of the Peer to Peer financial literacy program**

AUGUSTA – Attorney General Janet Mills joined the University of Maine System in announcing the expansion of UMF’s Peer-to-Peer Financial Literacy Program to the other universities in the system with the goal of working in partnership with Maine’s community colleges and local schools.

AG Mills was pleased to contribute \$900,000 from the settlement her office achieved in the watershed litigation against Wall Street giant Standard & Poor’s for its part in causing the recession and housing crisis of 2008.

In accordance with the agreement AG Mills reached with the legislature a year ago, all four legislative leaders agreed to the distribution of the remaining settlement funds.

“Today we have a student debt crisis,” AG Mills stated, “and this financial burden is preventing Maine graduates from achieving their best potential, reducing debt, buying homes and supporting young families in our state.”

Nationally, student debt has surpassed credit card debt, reaching \$1.4 trillion last year. Maine...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.maine.gov/ag/news/article.shtml?id=766314>

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## MISSISSIPPI

September 22, 2017

### **Treasurer Fitch, Attorney General Hood, the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE), and the Mississippi State University Extension Service Announce New Financial Education Initiative**

Today, at the Mississippi Council for Economic Education (MCEE) Forum on American Enterprise, Treasurer Lynn Fitch and Attorney General Jim Hood announced a new two-year partnership including the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE) and Mississippi State University Extension Service to advance financial education in Mississippi schools and communities, Making Sense of Your Dollars and Cents.

“MCEE has been a tremendous partner in my financial education initiative, TEAM, from the very beginning,” said Treasurer Lynn Fitch, who launched the public-private partnership Treasurer’s Education About Money (TEAM) into high schools and middle schools across the State three years ago. “Together, we have trained more than 1,200 teachers in just 3 years, who can not only teach financial education curriculum, but also incorporate these lessons into classes of all types and for all ages. This exciting new initiative with the Attorney General will help expand on these efforts to bring this important life...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/treasurer-fitch-attorney-general-hood-the-mississippi-council-on-economic-education-mcee-and-the-mississippi-state-university-extension-service-announce-new-financial-education-initiative/>

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## NEW MEXICO

September 27, 2017

### **SCAM ALERT: Balderas Warns New Mexicans of Jury Duty Scams**

Santa Fe, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert regarding scammers who are calling people in the Santa Fe-area threatening to jail or fine them \$2,000 for failure to report to jury duty. The jury duty scam may be familiar to people in other parts of the state as the Office of the Attorney General has had previous reports from Bernalillo and Doña Ana Counties, but the scam appears to have resurfaced in the Santa Fe-area. Attorney General Balderas’ statewide Scam Alert was issued today to urge New Mexicans to be on guard for this scam and protect themselves from financial harm.

“The courts do not call people to notify them of fines or warrants,” Attorney General Balderas said. “New Mexico Courts will issue formal paperwork for jury summonses, for fines or for warrants—but will never call people and threaten them. Anyone who receives a...

- **Original Press Release:**  
[http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/SCAM\\_ALERT\\_Balderas\\_Warns\\_New\\_Mexicans\\_of\\_Jury\\_Duty\\_Scams\\_.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/SCAM_ALERT_Balderas_Warns_New_Mexicans_of_Jury_Duty_Scams_.pdf)

September 28, 2017

### **SCAM ALERT: Attorney General Balderas Warns Taos-Area Electric Customers of New Scam**

Taos, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued his second Scam Alert in as many days for northern New Mexico. Today, the Attorney General is warning Taos-area electric customers of a new scam from callers pretending to represent Kit Carson Electric Co-op.

According to complaints received by the Office of Attorney General, callers most often use phone number 800-403-9430, ext. 230, though they have also used other phone ID numbers.

“This scam could have a terrible impact, but I’m counting on New Mexicans to let their friends and families know about it to prevent financial information and money being stolen,” Attorney General Balderas said. “Kit Carson has stated it will never ask customers to buy prepaid cards or money cards. In addition, Kit Carson provides all notices of disconnection in writing, through the mail—never by phone.”

The scam callers are known to threaten customers that technicians are en route...

- **Original Press Release:**  
[http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/SCAM\\_ALERT\\_Attorney\\_General\\_Balderas\\_Warns\\_Taos\\_Area\\_Electric\\_Customers\\_of\\_New\\_Scam.pdf](http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/SCAM_ALERT_Attorney_General_Balderas_Warns_Taos_Area_Electric_Customers_of_New_Scam.pdf)

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## NEW YORK

September 12, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Statement On Equifax Arbitration Clause**

Following conversations with the Attorney General's office, Equifax has updated the language on its website ([www.equifaxsecurity2017.com](http://www.equifaxsecurity2017.com)) to make explicitly clear that no consumer will be required to waive his/her legal right to a class action lawsuit as a condition for enrolling in the company's free credit monitoring and identity theft protection products.

The language on Equifax's website has been updated to the following:

To confirm, enrolling in the free credit file monitoring and identity theft protection products that we are offering as part of this cybersecurity incident does not prohibit consumers from taking legal action. We have already removed that language from the Terms of Use on the site [www.equifaxsecurity2017.com](http://www.equifaxsecurity2017.com). The Terms of Use on [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com) do not apply to the TrustedID Premier product being offered to consumers as a result of the cybersecurity incident. Again, to be as clear as possible, we will not apply any arbitration clause or class...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-statement-equifax-arbitration-clause>

September 15, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Op-Ed: In Wake Of Equifax Breach Albany Must Pass The New York Data Security Act**

In today's New York Daily News, Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman argues that Albany must pass the New York Data Security Act. Read the full op-ed:

Raising our guard vs. mega-breaches

By Eric T. Schneiderman

The massive Equifax data breach made millions of Americans feel extraordinarily vulnerable. More than 140 million Americans — that's more than half the adults in the country, including more than 8 million New Yorkers — appear to have had their most sensitive personal information revealed. My office has already opened an investigation into exactly what happened.

The scale of this breach and the severity of the privacy invasion is shocking and completely unprecedented. But it was entirely predictable. It is in many ways merely an escalation in a disturbing trend of what I call mega-breaches. Last year, there were 1,300 significant data breaches in New York — up 60% from the year before.

These breaches are inexcusable, and we should...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-op-ed-wake-equifax-breach-albany-must-pass-new-york-data-security-act>

September 28, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Issues Guidance For Federal Student Loan Borrowers Ahead Of 10th Anniversary Of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program**

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today issued guidance for federal student loan borrowers, who seek to qualify for forgiveness under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (“PSLF”) beginning on the program’s 10th anniversary next month. The bi-partisan program, enacted by Congress in 2007, was designed to encourage individuals to pursue public sector jobs by easing the burden of their federal student debt—forgiving student loans for people who work for the government and certain public interest organizations.

“My office is committed to ensuring that the Department of Education keeps its promise to every graduate who entered public service,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Whether a borrower served in the military, at a government agency, at a non-profit, or any other eligible organization, we want to make sure their hard work and financial sacrifice is properly rewarded. Any New Yorker who thinks they've been wrongly denied federal loan forgiveness should contact my office...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-issues-guidance-federal-student-loan-borrowers-ahead-10th-anniversary>

September 28, 2017

### **Attorney General Schneiderman's Office Testifies On Massive Equifax Breach**

Today, Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman’s office testified about the massive Equifax data breach at the New York State Senate Consumer Protection Committee Hearing on Identity Theft.

The Attorney General’s Office launched a formal investigation into the Equifax breach earlier this month and issued a number of consumer alerts to protect those impacted. Following conversations with the Attorney General’s office, Equifax has addressed a number of issues – including a delay in notifying consumers of the breach; a forced arbitration clause in their free credit monitoring that has now been removed, and their failure to provide Spanish-language customer service to consumers affected by the breach. Equifax has also agreed to provide consumers the ability to lock and unlock their credit file for life.

Additionally, Attorney General Schneiderman has also sent data security inquiries to Experian and TransUnion, the two other major credit reporting agencies.

Bureau of Internet and Technology Deputy Bureau Chief...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/attorney-general-schneidermans-office-testifies-massive-equifax-breach>

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OHIO

September 08, 2017

### **Grandparents Target of Phone Scams, DeWine Warns**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— In recognition of National Grandparent's Day this Sunday, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine is warning families to beware of phone scams targeting grandparents. In a typical "grandparent" phone scam, a grandparent receives a phone call from someone posing as a grandchild. The caller claims to be in trouble and in urgent need of money, maybe to pay a fine or to keep the grandchild out of jail. The grandparent is asked to send money immediately, often out of the country, using a prepaid money card or wire transfer. In other variations of the scam, the person on the phone asks for iTunes gift cards. The caller will often ask the grandparent not to "tell Mom or Dad."

"Scammers believe grandparents are easy targets because of the special relationship many have with their grandchildren," Attorney General DeWine said. "We want to make sure families are educated about the..."

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/September-2017/Grandparents-Target-of-Phone-Scams-DeWine-Warns>

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## OKLAHOMA

September 15, 2017

### **Attorney General Hunter to Speak at AARP Oklahoma Cons, Frauds and Scams Safety Seminar**

TULSA – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter will join a host of local fraud watch experts and consumer advocates to speak on the latest scams targeting Oklahomans at the AARP Oklahoma, Cons Frauds and Scams Safety Seminar.

The event takes place Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 6 p.m. at the Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center Zarrow Campus in the Barbara and Dave Sylvan Auditorium, 2021 E. 71st St., in Tulsa.

Admission is free and open to the public, but registration is required. To register, click here: <http://bit.ly/2ya27aD>. Registration closes at 11 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 18.

Attorney General Hunter said the free event is open to all ages and is a great way to educate the public of the latest frauds and scams targeting the area.

"Whether it's a clever scheme using modern technology, or as simple as a door-to-door salesman trying to get your personal information, fraud comes in all shapes and sizes," ...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=35843](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=35843)

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## RHODE ISLAND

September 07, 2017

### **Attorney General Kilmartin and Infoshred Team Up for Free Shredding Event at Pilgrim Senior Center**

Continuing his commitment to helping Rhode Island residents protect against identity theft, Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin is teaming up with Infoshred to offer free shredding



services on Friday, September 15th, from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., at the Pilgrim Senior Center, located at 27 Pilgrim Parkway in Warwick, RI.

The shredding service is free and open to the public. All consumers are invited to drop off up to two boxes or two paper shopping bags of documents for shredding, and are encouraged to donate a non-perishable food item for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

Every year, scores of Americans have their identities stolen, with the U.S. Department of Justice estimating that approximately 16.6 million people nationwide experience identity theft annually. While data breaches at major retailers make headlines, many scam artists use much more low-tech methods to gain access to your personal information – like digging through your trash....

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/31376>

September 27, 2017

### **Attorney General Kilmartin and National Grid Warn of Billing Scams Targeting Rhode Island Businesses**

After receiving more than a dozen complaints from small business owners alerting the Office that they were targets of a billing scam with callers posing as representatives of National Grid, Attorney General Kilmartin is urging other businesses to be on high alert should they receive a phone call from a person purporting to be from the company.

Business owners have reported that the person calling seeks payment for a past due balance on their utility bill. In some instances, the caller offers to "lower" the amount owed if the customer agrees to make an immediate payment. The caller requests payment be made by a pre-paid debit-like card (available at retail locations) and provides a fraudulent phone number for the business owner to call back with the pre-paid card information. In some instances, the caller provides the location of nearby retail outlets that sell the pre-paid cards.

The phone number the scammers provide...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/31520>