About the State Center Consumer Protection Report

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, 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.
- 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
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ALABAMA

November 30, 2017

AG Marshall Announces Shelby County Woman Sentenced by State Court After Pleading Guilty to Fraudulently Soliciting Donations

Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that Jennifer Flynn Cataldo, of Sterrett, pleaded guilty in Shelby County Circuit Court Thursday to two counts of first-degree theft of property by deception for fraudulently soliciting $38,080 from two GoFundMe accounts while falsely claiming to have cancer. She was sentenced to serve two years in prison.

Under the sentencing, Cataldo will serve two years for each count, running concurrently. Her state prison sentence will also run concurrent with her federal prison sentence of more than 25 months, handed down by a U.S. District Court on November 8, 2017.

“Those who prey upon the charitable intentions of good Samaritans not only do a tremendous disservice to those truly in need but also betray the trust of the community,” said Attorney General Steve Marshall. “This sentence should send a strong signal to others who may harbor similar intentions of deceiving the public’s generosity that there will...

Original Press Release: https://www.ago.state.al.us/News#5809

CALIFORNIA

November 29, 2017

Attorney General Xavier Becerra Sues For-Profit Ashford University For Defrauding and Deceiving Students

SAN FRANCISCO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced that he is suing Ashford University, an online for-profit school based in San Diego, and its parent company Bridgepoint Education for engaging in unlawful business practices. In the lawsuit, Attorney General Becerra alleges that Ashford made false promises and furnished faulty information to students to persuade them to enroll. It also used illegal debt collection practices when students struggled to pay their bills. Attorney General Becerra seeks restitution for students, a permanent injunction prohibiting similar activities in the future, and civil penalties from Ashford University.

“No school should ever steal the American Dream from its students, but that is exactly what Ashford University did,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Ashford University preyed on veterans and people of modest means. This for-profit college illegally misled students about their educational prospects and unfairly saddled them with debt. In today’s economy, college is too pivotal...

November 22, 2017

**Attorney General Becerra Announces $2 Million Settlement Involving Santa Barbara-based Cottage Health System Over Failure to Protect Patient Medical Records**

SANTA BARBARA — California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced a $2 million settlement with Cottage Health System and its affiliated hospitals in California resolving allegations that they failed to implement basic, reasonable safeguards to protect patient medical information in violation of state and federal privacy laws. The settlement requires Cottage to maintain security practices and procedures to protect patients’ medical information from unauthorized access or disclosure. This settlement follows two separate data breach incidents by Cottage Health where more than 50,000 patients’ medical information was made publicly available online.

“When patients go to a hospital to seek medical care, the last thing they should have to worry about is having their personal medical information exposed. The law requires health care providers to protect patients' privacy. On both of these counts, Cottage Health failed,” said Attorney General Becerra.

In this action, the Attorney General’s Office alleged that Cottage Health System, a...


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November 22, 2017

**Attorney General Becerra: DIRECTV Agrees To $9.5 Million Settlement for Violations of California’s Hazardous Waste and Unfair Competition Laws**

SACRAMENTO – Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O’Malley today announced a settlement with DIRECTV to resolve allegations that its California facilities unlawfully disposed of large volumes of hazardous waste – including hazardous batteries, electronic devices, and aerosols – and committed additional violations stemming from the mismanagement of such items. These acts constitute violations of California’s Hazardous Waste Control Law, and of California’s Unfair Competition Law, as such conduct gives DIRECTV a competitive advantage over other regulated entities that are complying with the law. On November 21, 2017, by stipulation of the parties, the Alameda County Superior Court entered a final judgment incorporating the terms of the settlement.

“Unlawfully disposing of hazardous waste can lead to serious health and environmental risks. That is why DA O’Malley and I are holding DIRECTV accountable today,” Attorney General Becerra said. “The California Department of Justice will continue working to...

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

November 28, 2017

Attorney General Racine Wins $242K Judgment Against Former Park Southern Neighborhood Corporation President

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that his office has secured a judgment against Rowena Scott, the former board president of the non-profit Park Southern Neighborhood Corporation (PSNC), for abusing her authority and acting contrary to the charitable mission of PSNC by siphoning non-profit funds from its 360-unit affordable apartment building at 800 Southern Avenue SE.

While the building fell into disrepair and financial distress, to the detriment of its tenants, Scott paid herself tens of thousands of dollars a year and gave herself free rent for a period of nearly nine years. After a trial to determine the amount of funds Scott improperly diverted from PSNC, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia has ruled that Scott must return $242,605.01 to the non-profit.

“Preserving habitable affordable housing is a top priority for my office. The people charged with carrying out a not-for-profit mission to support such housing..."
November 20, 2017
CONSUMER ALERT: Attorney General Racine Sues, Warns Consumers About Austin Royster Funeral Home
WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today filed a consumer lawsuit and a motion for a temporary restraining order against Austin Royster Funeral Home and two individuals who owned or operated the home for operating without the proper licenses and charging grieving families for services it did not provide. Attorney General Racine also warned consumers against doing any further business with Austin Royster, located at 502 Kennedy Street NW in the District’s Brightwood Park neighborhood. “Grieving families shouldn’t have to worry about whether they are being taken advantage of while mourning the loss of their loved ones. We are deeply concerned that Austin Royster may have engaged in multiple unlawful practices while providing funeral services,” said Attorney General Racine. “Our office is working hard to help relatives and friends of the deceased individuals conclude their affairs and get restitution.”
Austin Royster has been operating without proper licensing for substantial...


GEORGIA
November 15, 2017
Carr: Title Pawn Company to Provide $225,000 in Restitution and Penalties for Allegations of Unlawful Practices
ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced that First American Title Lending of Georgia, LLC (First American) has entered into a settlement with the State of Georgia in response to allegations that it engaged in unlawful practices that violated the Georgia Fair Business Practices Act and the Georgia laws governing title pawns (O.C.G.A. § 44-12-130 et seq.). “Consumers who seek out title pawns may already be in financial straits,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “Our office is committed to protecting vulnerable consumers from companies that try to intimidate and take advantage of them through false threats and illegal actions.” A title pawn is essentially a short-term, high interest rate pawn transaction that uses the clear title on a consumer’s vehicle as collateral. If a consumer defaults on his or her payments, the title pawn company’s only recourse, like in any pawn transaction, is to require the consumer to turn...

IDAHO

November 14, 2017

Former Idaho Insurance Agent Sentenced for Misappropriating Client Premiums

(Boise) - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has announced the successful prosecution of an Idahoan accused of using customers’ insurance premiums for personal purchases.

On Monday, November 13, a judge in Twin Falls County sentenced 49-year-old Mark J. Lee to jail, probation, and ordered him to pay restitution.

Judge Ronald Wilper sentenced Lee to a prison term of one year fixed and four years indeterminate. The prison sentence was then suspended. The judge ordered Lee to serve 30 days in jail and pay $1,801 in restitution. He was also sentenced to five years felony probation.

Lee, a former insurance agent, pleaded guilty in September to misappropriation or diversion of fiduciary funds. The plea came after an Idaho Department of Insurance investigation revealed Lee had diverted clients’ insurance premiums for his own use while he was an Idaho licensed insurance producer in Twin Falls. The fraud was discovered by a client when the client was...

- Original Press Release:

ILLINOIS

November 29, 2017

MADIGAN ISSUES SUBPOENAS TO MASSAGE ENVY SPA CHAIN

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today issued subpoenas to the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based franchisor Massage Envy and four of its Illinois-based franchisees as part of an investigation into claims the spa chain failed to handle sexual assault allegations by customers appropriately.

Madigan's office is investigating Massage Envy and its Illinois franchisees at certain locations in Chicago, Elmhurst, Naperville and Tinley Park following public reports of women alleging they were sexually assaulted by male massage therapists. Through the subpoenas, Madigan is seeking information about the company's policies, employee training, and handling of complaints related to sexual assault and sexually inappropriate behavior.

"I appreciate the women who have reported the sexual assaults they experienced during their massages," Madigan said. "I issued subpoenas to Massage Envy because the public has a right to know what Massage Envy's policies are and what steps the company takes to prevent and address sexual assaults." ...

- Original Press Release:
AG Derek Schmidt: Jewell County roofer banned from doing business in Kansas

MANKATO – (November 29, 2017) – A Jewell County man operating as a roofer has been banned from doing business in Kansas and ordered to repay a Kansas consumer, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

Brock Shadduck was ordered to repay a total of $4,881.44 to a consumer for violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act and the Kansas Roofing Registration Act. In addition, Shadduck was banned from operating as a roofing contractor in the State of Kansas unless and until he obtains proper registration. District Judge Kim W. Cudney approved the default judgment last week in Jewell County District Court after Shadduck failed to respond to a lawsuit filed against him. Shadduck was also ordered to pay the attorney general’s investigation costs and a civil penalty.

Schmidt accused Shadduck of operating as a roofing contractor without properly registering as required by the Kansas Roofing Registration Act. He was also accused...


AG Derek Schmidt: Former Finney County contractor permanently banned from doing business in Kansas

OLATHE – (November 21, 2017) – A former Finney County man currently living in Leawood who was operating as a contractor has been banned from doing business in Kansas and ordered to repay four Kansas consumers, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

David J. Rosales, d/b/a Rosales Plumbing, d/b/a Rosales Plumbing LLC, d/b/a J&D Plumbing and Boss Construction LLC was ordered to repay a total of $65,770 to consumers for violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act. In addition, Rosales was permanently banned from engaging, soliciting and applying for plumbing and construction services in Kansas. District Judge Rhonda K. Mason approved the default judgment this week in Johnson County District Court after Rosales failed to respond to a lawsuit filed against him. Rosales was also ordered to pay the attorney general’s investigation costs and a civil penalty.

Schmidt accused Rosales of engaging in sales of home improvement services, including plumbing, without...


Former Finney County man pleads guilty to theft and deceptive commercial practice

GARDEN CITY – (November 9, 2017) – A former Finney County man pleaded guilty to felony theft and deceptive commercial practice, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.
David Rosales, 41, now of Leawood, pleaded guilty on Tuesday in Finney County District Court to one felony count of theft and two counts of misdemeanor deceptive commercial practice. The case stemmed from an investigation by the Garden City Police Department and the attorney general’s office, which discovered that Rosales contracted to do plumbing and construction work under the auspices of being licensed but in fact he was not. He then accepted payment from three consumers and did little or no work. The crimes occurred between August and October 2012. District Judge Franklin Pierce took the plea and scheduled sentencing for December 13 at 2 p.m. in Finney County District Court. The case is being prosecuted by Deputy Attorney General Steven Karrer of the attorney general's...


November 08, 2017

Topeka auto dealer accused of consumer violations, temporarily banned from operating

TOPEKA – (November 8, 2017) – A Topeka auto dealer has been sued for violating state consumer protection laws and is temporarily banned by court order from doing business in Kansas while the lawsuit proceeds, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today. Justin Bogina, of Tecumseh, and his business, Auto Acceptance Center Corp., of Topeka, have been temporarily ordered to refrain from conducting business related to the sale of property or services within the state of Kansas. Chief Judge Evelyn Wilson issued the temporary restraining order Monday in Shawnee County District Court.

Attorney General Schmidt last week filed a lawsuit against Bogina and his company alleging multiple and recurring violations of Kansas consumer protection law over the past several years and continuing to the present. Among the allegations is that in 2014 Bogina advertised he would donate $100 per vehicle sold during a specific time period to the memorial fund established for...


MAINE

November 30, 2017

Attorney General Mills and Federal Trade Commission announce settlement with supplement sellers on false advertising charges

AUGUSTA – A health products company and its owner are settling charges brought by Attorney General Janet Mills and the FTC that they deceived consumers with promises that their products could treat everything from arthritis to memory loss. The proposed federal court
order bars the defendants from engaging in a wide range of business practices that the Attorney General and the FTC allege deceived consumers. According to the complaint, Health Research Laboratories, LLC (HRL) and Kramer Duhon marketed two health products, “BioTherapex,” a dietary supplement that purportedly targets the liver to address a host of ailments, and “NeuroPlus,” a brain supplement, using false and unsupported claims.

“We are putting supplement sellers on notice,” said Attorney General Mills. “False advertising, fake experts, and unauthorized charges to consumers are unlawful and we will hold those engaging in these activities accountable. The fact that they are also targeting vulnerable people with serious health concerns is...


**MARYLAND**

November 27, 2017

**Attorney General Frosh Obtains Restraining Order Against Prince George’s County Moving Company**

Baltimore, MD (November 27, 2017)—Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division has filed charges against Swift Van Lines, LLC (formerly known as Revolution Moving and Storage, LLC), a household goods moving company based in Hyattsville, and its owner, Juan Carlos Martinez, for charging consumers several times the amount the company estimated it would cost to move consumers’ goods, and then driving off with consumers’ goods if they did not pay the increased demand. Under Maryland law, when a move takes place within the State, a moving company cannot refuse to deliver consumers’ household goods after they have been loaded on the truck. Maryland law also places limits on how much movers can charge consumers above their estimates. In most cases, movers cannot charge more than 125% of the estimate. The Division obtained a temporary restraining order from Prince George’s County Circuit Court on November 21...


**MASSACHUSETTS**

November 30, 2017

**Four Companies Settle Claims of Illegal Asbestos Work During Renovations at Greater Lowell Technical High School**

Boston — The general contractor and two environmental monitoring companies hired to renovate Greater Lowell Technical High School in Tyngsborough will pay up to $300,000 in
penalties to settle allegations regarding illegal asbestos work at the school during renovations, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today. The project’s asbestos abatement company will also forfeit its licenses to perform asbestos work.

The consent judgments, entered today in Suffolk Superior Court, settle a lawsuit filed by the AG’s Office in December 2016 against R.M. Technologies, Inc., the Lawrence company hired to abate asbestos during the school renovation. In September, the AG’s Office filed an amended complaint, adding allegations against the general contractor of the renovation project, Consigli Construction Company, Inc., and the two companies hired to monitor the asbestos abatement work, Universal Environmental Consultants, Inc. and Hub Testing Laboratory, Inc.

“Companies that are paid to address asbestos must carefully comply with environmental and safety regulations...


November 29, 2017

AG Healey Settles with Billing Company over Data Breach Impacting Children

Boston — Attorney General Maura Healey obtained a judgment against a Medicaid billing company that provided processing services for Massachusetts public school districts after a data breach put more than 2,600 Massachusetts children at risk of identity theft and fraud. A consent judgment was entered in Suffolk Superior Court today against the New Hampshire-based Multi-State Billing Services (MSB), requiring the company to pay $100,000 and implement improved security practices after an investigation by the AG’s Office found it violated state consumer protection and data security laws.

AG’s Office began an investigation after MSB reported that a company laptop was stolen. According to the company, the laptop likely contained the unencrypted personal information of more than 2,600 Massachusetts schoolchildren, including their names, social security numbers, Medicaid identification numbers, and for some students, their birth dates.

“This settlement ensures that this company implements the necessary protections so this type of breach never happens again and...


November 15, 2017

Unlicensed For-profit Nursing School to Pay Restitution to Students After Misrepresenting Its Training Programs

Boston — A for-profit nursing school must pay restitution and is permanently barred from holding classes in Massachusetts after operating without a license and misrepresenting its training programs to dozens of local students, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Under the consent judgment, entered in Suffolk Superior Court, the Florida-based school –
Hosanna College of Health, Inc. – will pay $190,000 in restitution for eligible students who attended between 2013 and 2015, and cannot collect any outstanding tuition payments from students who took in-person classes in Massachusetts. In February 2016, the AG’s Office sued Hosanna, along with its founding executive, Jackson Augustin, and one of its former officers, Michelle Desarmes, for making a series of misrepresentations to students from the Boston area’s Haitian community who were seeking to take nursing classes in Massachusetts. According to the complaint, the classes were held in greater Boston and the students were not properly prepared for...


November 08, 2017

AG Healey Sues Unregistered Everett Contractor for Illegal Home Improvement Scheme

Boston — An unregistered Everett home improvement contractor has been sued for allegedly accepting more than $350,000 from homeowners for home improvement projects but failing to complete the work, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The lawsuit, filed against Richard Rolon d/b/a The Design Consultants in Suffolk Superior Court, seeks consumer restitution and civil penalties for violations of the Massachusetts Consumer Protection Act and the Home Improvement Contractor Act.

“We allege that this contractor ripped off homeowners for thousands of dollars and left his projects unfinished and even uninhabitable,” said AG Healey. “We are taking this action to recover losses for consumers.”

The AG’s Consumer Protection Division began an investigation after receiving several consumer complaints that Rolon took hundreds of thousands of dollars in deposits for renovation projects, then failed to provide the promised services. The AG’s Office has since received information that Rolon’s business has ceased operating.

According to the complaint, Rolon solicited...


MICHIGAN

November 16, 2017

Schuette Shuts Down Another Deceptive Veterans Charity; Virginia-Based Professional Fundraiser Penalized

LANSING — Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced his Charitable Trust Section has reached a settlement with Healing American Heroes, Inc. of Round Rock, Texas and its professional fundraiser Jeremy Squire & Associates for violations of the Charitable Organizations and Solicitations Act. As part of the settlement Helping American Heroes will be
dissolved and both the charity and professional fundraiser will pay restitution. “Today’s settlement ends another scam that exploited donor sympathy for veterans,” said Schuette. “Deceptive veterans charities continue to be a problem—but it’s a problem our office is addressing. In the last year, we’ve shut down two deceptive national veterans charities and investigated or alleged violations against others. I want to thank my Charitable Trust team for their diligence in protecting Michigan residents from charity scams and I encourage residents to remain vigilant when making charitable donations.”

In July 2017, Schuette alleged over a million violations of the...

November 15, 2017

Schuette Charges Livingston County Man with 15 Felonies in Mortgage Assistance Scam
LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that his Homeowner Protection Unit has filed 15 felony charges, including Conducting a Criminal Enterprise, and 15 misdemeanors against Lawrence Adell Sefa, 54, of Fenton, for stealing tens of thousands of dollars from Michigan residents who were facing mortgage foreclosures. Sefa operated his scam through his company, LAS Loan Assistance Centers. The charges were filed following an Attorney General investigation.

“These type of scam artists continue to take advantage of Michigan residents during an extremely vulnerable time in their lives, and we continue to hold them accountable for their actions,” said Schuette. “I want to thank my team for their dedication to finding these individuals, and I hope this serves as warning to others that we will continue to do what we can to protect Michigan residents.”

Schuette filed the following charges against Sefa on November 9, 2017 in Livingston County 53B District...

November 02, 2017

Schuette Sues Texas Fundraiser for Deceptive Clothing Donation Bins
LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced a lawsuit against Texas-based clothing donation bin operator ATRS, Inc.

ATRS owns and operates 251 clothing donation bins in Michigan. The bins state that the Michigan Humane Society “receives 100% of the market value of every donation received at this location.” However, by contract, ATRS pays the Michigan Humane Society just $.02 per pound. For 2016, donations to the bins generated $835k in revenue for ATRS, an average of $.34 per pound; ATRS paid the Michigan Humane Society $49k ($.02 per pound) for these items, which equals just 6% of revenue generated from the bins.

“These bins are deceptive and have misled Michigan residents regarding the true beneficiary of
the donated clothes,” said Schuette. “Donors wanted to benefit the Michigan Humane Society—not some business in Texas. Michigan law requires that charitable solicitations be truthful. It’s not a lot to ask, and Michigan donors...

November 01, 2017

**Macomb County Insurance Agent Pleads Guilty to Embezzling from Southeast Michigan Seniors**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that Paul Garceau, Jr., of Grosse Pointe Park, pleaded guilty to one count of Embezzlement by an Agent greater than $100,000, a twenty-year felony, and two counts of Embezzlement by an Agent between $50,000 and $100,000, a fifteen-year felony, and agreed to pay $613,199 in restitution.

Judge Richard Caretti of the Macomb County Circuit Court took the plea. Sentencing is scheduled for December 12 at 9:00 a.m.

“If you take advantage of Michigan seniors, there are consequences,” said Schuette. “Today’s guilty plea is the first step toward closure and financial assistance for those hurt by this crime.”

“Mr. Garceau’s actions were reprehensible,” said DIFS Director Patrick McPharlin. “The staff of the Department of Insurance and Financial Services, together with the Department of Attorney General, did an outstanding job on behalf of Michigan consumers.”

Garceau had his Michigan insurance producer license revoked on February 16,...

November 22, 2017

**AG Hawley Investigating Uber Data Breach**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley today announced his office will take immediate action to investigate the Uber data breach and whether Uber’s ensuing conduct violated Missouri consumer-protection and data-privacy laws.

On Wednesday, the Attorney General’s Office sent a letter to Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi demanding that Uber take immediate action to notify all affected consumers, protect those consumers’ personal information, and prevent any future breaches.

“Missouri consumers deserve to know if and when their personal information is compromised—whether that occurs under Uber’s watch or that of other large tech companies,” Hawley said. “As I made clear last week, my Office is committed to protecting the privacy and safety of Missouri consumers against the whims of tech giants.”

Missouri law requires that companies provide prompt notice to consumers whose information...
may have been compromised. In addition, Uber’s failure to secure data as well the concealment of the data breach may...


November 21, 2017
AG Hawley wins $643,703.60 judgment against Timothy Mundy for defrauding Missouri consumers
Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley obtained a judgment of $643,703.60 on behalf of ten Missouri consumers who were defrauded by Timothy Mundy. Mundy entered into contracts to provide home construction services and demanded large upfront payments for materials. However, he would spend the upfront payments on personal expenses. When funds ran dry, Mundy would ask the homeowners for more money telling them that the project had run into unforeseen expenses, all while doing little to no actual work. When consumers finally demanded Mundy complete the work they had paid him to do, he would disappear and move on to his next target. In the few instances Mundy actually completed some tasks, the quality of the work was so poor it had to be redone. Mundy intentionally targeted consumers who were elderly, legal immigrants, or were experiencing hardship, knowing that these consumers would be more trusting and easier...


November 13, 2017
AG Hawley Issues Investigative Demands to Google, Inc.
Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley announced today that his Office has issued an investigative subpoena to Internet giant Google, Inc., in connection with an investigation into the company’s business practices. Specifically, the investigation will seek to determine if Google has violated the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act—Missouri’s principal consumer-protection statute—and Missouri’s antitrust laws.
The business practices in question are Google’s collection, use, and disclosure of information about Google users and their online activities; Google’s alleged misappropriation of online content from the websites of its competitors; and Google’s alleged manipulation of search results to preference websites owned by Google and to demote websites that compete with Google.
“There is strong reason to believe that Google has not been acting with the best interest of Missourians in mind,” Hawley said. “My Office will not stand by and let private consumer information be jeopardized by industry giants, especially to pad their...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-issues-investigative-demands-to-google-inc-
NEW JERSEY

November 28, 2017

**Attorney General Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs Announce Temporary Suspension of Doctor’s License Because of ‘Inappropriate Behaviors’**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs have announced that the license of a doctor practicing in Middlesex County has been temporarily suspended because the physician’s “inappropriate behaviors” presented a danger to colleagues, patients and coworkers.

At the conclusion of a hearing before the Board of Medical Examiners on November 8, 2017, Dr. Sharon C. Worosilo was ordered to immediately stop practicing medicine and to turn in her license, according to an Order of Temporary Suspension signed by Board President George J. Scott, D.O., D.P.M.

The Complaint, filed on November 3, 2017, alleges that Worosilo’s behavior suggests impairment that likely affects her “ability to practice medicine and surgery with reasonable skill and safety.”

Among other incidents, Worosilo allegedly attempted for more than 40 minutes to perform an epidural injection on a patient while repeatedly asking an X-ray technician what she should do next, according to...


November 16, 2017

**Board of Medical Examiners Permanently Revokes License of Burlington County Doctor for Allegedly Over-Prescribing Opioids and Failing to Check Prescription Monitoring Program**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that the state Board of Medical Examiners (“the Board”) has permanently revoked the medical license of a Burlington County psychiatrist who allegedly prescribed more than 62,000 Oxycodone pills to two patients over four years without justification, and without conducting mandatory lookups on the NJ Prescription Monitoring Program (“PMP.”).

Dr. Joel B. Glass, who practiced in Marlton, allegedly indiscriminately prescribed dangerously high quantities of opioids, as well as other controlled dangerous substances (“CDS,”) despite warnings from fellow doctors, pharmacies and/or insurance providers.

Glass is the first physician to be cited by the Board for violating regulations that took effect in November 2016 requiring all prescribers to conduct quarterly PMP lookups for patients to whom they prescribe Schedule II CDS for acute or chronic pain.

To resolve the allegations against him, the 74-year-old psychiatrist agreed to give up his...

November 01, 2017

**LPL Financial agrees to pay New Jersey Bureau of Securities $975,000 to Resolve Violations Relating to Sales of Alternative Products**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that a Boston financial firm with branch offices in New Jersey has agreed to pay $975,000 to resolve a Bureau of Securities investigation into the sale of several types of alternative investments, including non-traded real estate investment trusts (REITs) and non-traded business development companies (BDCs), in New Jersey.

In a Consent Order signed October 24, LPL Financial, LLC, agreed to pay $975,000 to resolve the Bureau’s findings that the company’s agents sold alternative investments that were unsuitable for certain investors, did not reasonably supervise those sales, and did not keep required books and records. These alternative investments are complex products that are not traded on any exchange and that have a limited secondary market, making it difficult for investors to sell them if needed.

“This substantial settlement with LPL Financial sends a message that the securities...


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**NEW MEXICO**

November 29, 2017

**Attorney General Balderas Announces Investigation of Wells Fargo for Illegal Scheme**

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced that he has been investigating Wells Fargo for over a year and will be making a demand for damages on behalf of thousands of New Mexicans who were victimized by an illegal scheme creating nearly 19,000 fake and unauthorized bank and credit card accounts. Wells Fargo is the largest, most powerful bank in New Mexico with 93 branches doing approximately $9 billion of business in the state. The Attorney General’s investigation focuses on potential violations of the New Mexico Unfair Practices Act. The focus of the litigation is to strengthen corporate stewardship and increase consumer protection.

“While hard working New Mexico families were struggling to put food on the table, pay their bills and save what’s left for the future, Wells Fargo was scamming them and charging them fees for accounts they never authorized,” Attorney General Hector Balderas said. “When New...

NEW YORK
November 29, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With St. Lawrence Home Building For Failure To Follow Home Improvement Contractor Law
WATERTOWN – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has reached a settlement with St. Lawrence Home Building Corporation, resolving an investigation of the home improvement contracting company over its repeated failure to use contracts as required by state law. An investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s Office uncovered that, despite being put on direct notice of their legal obligations to use contracts in 2010 and 2013, the company continued to disregard the law. The agreement announced today requires the company, which is owned and operated by William DiTrinco, to use compliant contracts in future home improvement projects, and to pay a $10,000 penalty to the State of New York.
“For decades, St. Lawrence Home Building failed to provide homeowners with a written and signed contract before initiating projects. These agreements protect consumers and contractors alike, and are required by state law,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “I encourage...


November 27, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea Of Brooklyn Real Estate Developer Daniel Melamed
BROOKLYN – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced that Brooklyn real estate developer Daniel Melamed pleaded guilty today in Kings County Supreme Court to a 13-count indictment, including Residential Mortgage Fraud in the Second Degree and two counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, class C felonies; as well as four counts of Forgery in the Second Degree, four counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, and two counts of Attempted Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, all class D felonies. Melamed admitted under oath to engaging in various real estate schemes that defrauded banks and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) by creating shell corporations and forged letters to illegally purchase and/or sell multiple Brooklyn properties between 2011 and 2014. Today’s guilty plea follows charges brought by Attorney General Schneiderman in November 2016.
“Daniel Melamed stole money from taxpayers and...


November 22, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces Indictment Of Brooklyn Resident For Deed Theft Of Two Residential Properties
BROOKLYN – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the indictment of
Marilyn Sanchez, 49, of Brooklyn, for allegedly filing two fraudulent deeds and supporting documents with the New York City Register’s Office in order to fraudulently acquire ownership of two separate residential homes in Brooklyn, New York.

“It’s unconscionable that scammers would prey on vulnerable New Yorkers in an attempt to steal their homes – but as property values continue to increase, these sorts of scams are on the rise,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “My office won’t hesitate to prosecute those who take advantage of New York homeowners. I encourage all New Yorkers to follow our tips and make use of our free programs in order to protect themselves.”

“We remain vigilant in our investigations and arrests of those responsible for deed fraud,” said New York City Sheriff Joseph Fucito. “Our partnership with the Attorney General has been an integral...

November 16, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces Indictment Of Unlicensed Plastic Surgeon And Licensed Physician Charged With Illegally Performing Over 60 Plastic Surgeries

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the arrests of unlicensed plastic surgeon Brad Jacobs, 56, of Westbury, NY, and licensed physician Nicholas Sewell, 74, of Jackson Heights, NY, on charges they engaged in a four-year scheme to illegally perform plastic surgeries on over 60 patients, including causing permanent disfigurement to one patient. Jacobs, a former plastic surgeon, surrendered his New York medical license in 2007 after the New York State Department of Health charged him with 29 specifications of Professional Medical Misconduct. From September 2012 to June 2016, Jacobs and Sewell allegedly defrauded patients undergoing costly cosmetic surgery procedures – each averaging between $8,000 and $10,000 – by falsely representing that Jacobs was authorized to practice medicine.

“It is unconscionable that an unlicensed surgeon would take advantage of unsuspecting patients like this,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Practicing medicine without a license jeopardizes the lives of New Yorkers,...


November 16, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces Prison Sentence For Fake Attorney Who Defrauded Over 400 New Yorkers

ALBANY — Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the sentencing of Antonia Barrone, a/k/a Mario Vrendenburg (“Barrone”), who pled guilty to operating a fake law firm and pretending to be a licensed attorney. Through a civil lawsuit and an extensive investigation, the Attorney General’s office uncovered that Barrone defrauded over 400 New Yorkers out of more than $23,000 over the course of nearly five years. Today, Barrone was sentenced before
Albany County Court Judge Honorable Peter A. Lynch to 1½ to 3 years in state prison for one count of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree. Barrone was also ordered to pay nearly $270,000 in restitution and penalties.

In May 2017, the Attorney General’s Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau filed a lawsuit in Albany County Supreme Court against NYS Prisoner Assistance Center, Inc., operating as the NYS Prisoner Assistance Center or NY Parole Aids (“NYSPAC”), and its owner,...


November 15, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Files Suit Against Syracuse Real Estate Company For Deed Theft And Mortgage Rescue Scam

SYRACUSE – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that he filed a lawsuit against Joseph Funding Company, Inc. and its owners Rebecca Ausby and Joseph Holman for allegedly engaging in a deceptive scheme to trick New Yorkers into turning over ownership of their homes to the Syracuse-based real estate company. The lawsuit alleges that Ausby and Holman preyed on homeowners who were struggling to pay their mortgage, at risk of foreclosure, or interested in getting rid of hard-to-sell properties without any profit or loss. The complaint – filed in Onondaga County Supreme Court – alleges that Ausby and Holman promised consumers that they could manage properties prior to a sale by finding tenants, collecting the rent, and paying the consumer’s mortgage. However, an investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s office uncovered that Ausby and Holman allegedly used these services as a guise and later duped consumers into transferring their property’s...


November 15, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Files Suit Against Buffalo-Niagara Home Improvement Contractor Who Violated Court Order

BUFFALO – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that he filed a lawsuit seeking relief for consumers defrauded by Robert B. Cooper, Jr. and his company, Robert’s Paving and Excavating, LLC, a Buffalo-Niagara area home improvement contracting business. Cooper, who previously did business as Finger Lakes Asphalt, received a court order in 2014 barring him from the home contracting business until he complied with New York State Law. However, based on new consumer complaints, the Attorney General’s office recently learned that Cooper has continued to operate his paving business under a new name, and in violation of the law. Cooper and his business – “Robert’s Paving and Excavating” – performed shoddy work, utilized bait-and-switch pricing, failed to obtain consumer authorization before beginning work, and intimidated consumers to collect inflated payments. As a result, Attorney General
Schneiderman is seeking to hold Cooper in civil and criminal contempt of court. If found...


November 07, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces $92,000 Judgment Against Rochester Area Home Improvement Contractor Following AG Lawsuit**

ROCHESTER – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office won a lawsuit for consumers against Brian Robinson, a Rochester-based home improvement contractor and snowplow operator who bilked New Yorkers out of over $42,000. Robinson, who owned and operated Apex Construction and Robinson and Son, Inc., must now pay $42,085 in restitution to consumers and $50,000 in penalties and costs.

An investigation conducted by the Attorney General's office uncovered that Robinson defrauded consumers by taking deposits and keeping their money without ever performing the home improvement, snow plowing, and tree removal services he was contracted to do—even following blizzards and Hurricane Irma. In addition to the restitution and penalties, the order issued by New York State Supreme Court Justice Ann Marie Taddeo bans Robinson from taking any advance payments, including deposits for materials, until he posts a $100,000 insurance bond. The bond will protect consumers and ensure that they can...


November 03, 2017

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces $132K Settlement With Bushwick Landlords For Harassing Tenants With Illegal Buyout Offers**

BROOKLYN – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement reached with real estate developers and landlords Graham Jones, Greg Jones, and their related companies for violating anti-harassment law at their three rent-stabilized buildings in Bushwick, Brooklyn. After purchasing the buildings in 2016, the landlords immediately began approaching rent-stabilized tenants to try to convince them to move out of their apartments in exchange for money. These efforts are more commonly known as “buyout offers.” Between June 2016 and July 2017, a total of 33 tenants (more than one-third of the tenants living in the buildings) accepted buyout offers; however the landlords failed to provide these tenants with the required written notice explaining their rights under local law.

“Tenants should never feel harassed into vacating their homes,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “This settlement makes clear that we will aggressively enforce the law to protect tenants from those who seek to put...

NORTH CAROLINA

November 27, 2017

Attorney General Stein Holds Antique Vending Machine Repair Company Accountable Over Deceptive Business Practices

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that he has reached a settlement with Antiquities Vending Company over deceptive business practices. The settlement resolves allegations that the Granite Falls company deceived consumers by taking advance payments from them, promising to restore vintage soda machines or similar collectibles, and failing to perform the work, sometimes stringing the consumers along for months or years. As a result of the Attorney General’s Office’s action, Antiques Vending has returned $46,505.21 to North Carolinians.

“Consumers put faith in repair companies when they hand over their valuables for servicing,” said Attorney General Stein. “If a company does not deliver on its promises – whether that’s failing to perform the work or taking an unreasonable amount of time to complete it – my office will hold that company accountable.”

In addition to refunding consumers, the settlement requires that Antiques Vending:

Keep and make available to the Department of Justice...


NORTH DAKOTA

November 22, 2017

PHONY CHARITY PRETENDS TO HELP U.S. SOLDIERS OVERSEAS

BISMARCK, ND – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem issued a Cease & Desist order today, banning the fake charity “Nationwide Soldier Support” from doing business in North Dakota. Brittany Camacho of Puyallup, Washington, also operates a website, nationwidesoldierssupport.org, soliciting funds online for the supposed charity.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint that an individual was soliciting funds, ostensibly to send care packages to soldiers overseas, but neither the individual nor Nationwide Soldier Support were registered as a charitable organization or professional fundraiser.

Camacho responded to an initial phone call from investigators, promising to provide information about the solicitations in North Dakota, but then ignored investigators’ follow up phone calls and letters. After being served with a formal investigative demand for the details of her activities in North Dakota, Camacho called the investigators and told them to “prove it” and then an unidentified male interrupted the call...

November 16, 2017

OUT OF STATE MOVING COMPANY BANNED IN NORTH DAKOTA

BISMARCK, ND – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem has issued a Cease & Desist order against an out of state moving company operating under several business names, for violations of the state’s consumer fraud laws. All in the Family Moving & Storage NE, Inc., also does business as Able Moving & Storage, Inc., and Majestic Movers, Inc., and lists business addresses in Illinois and New York.

The consumer protection division initiated an investigation after a consumer complained that the company refused to deliver her household goods to her new address in North Dakota unless she paid an additional amount that was significantly more than the contract. The company did not respond to the consumer protection division, but investigators were advised that the US Department of Transportation, which regulates interstate moving companies, was also investigating. The US DOT was able to resolve the consumer’s complaint. However, the consumer protection investigators learned there are...


November 14, 2017

FRAUDULENT VEHICLE WARRANTY COMPANY BANNED IN NORTH DAKOTA

BISMARCK, ND – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem issued a Cease & Desist order against Jason Rhoden of Santa Ana, California, doing business as Vehicle Protection Department, LLC, for violations of the consumer fraud and telephone solicitation laws.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation after a consumer complained that she received a telephone solicitation even though her number is registered on the Do Not Call list. The consumer complained that Rhoden’s company offered to sell her an extended warranty for a vehicle she does not own. The consumer reported that when she questioned the caller, he responded with a threat, telling her he knew where she lived.

Rhoden also operates a website selling these supposed extended warranties, vehicleprotectiondepartment.net.

Rhoden ignored all efforts by investigators to contact him over several weeks, and he did not responded to the investigative demand for information about solicitation calls his company made to North Dakota residents....


November 03, 2017

MORE UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS BANNED

BISMARCK, ND – The Consumer Protection division has obtained a civil judgment against two unlicensed contractors, banning them from doing business in North Dakota. The court found
that Wayde Anderson and Shanda Anderson, doing business as WJA Builders of Ryder, ND, had violated consumer fraud and contractor licensing laws. WJA Builders had a contractor’s license until March, 2015, but the Andersons failed to renew it when it expired.

The Andersons took an advance payment of $10,000 from a Mountrail County homeowner to build two decks on the home. After cashing the homeowner’s check, the Andersons did not do any work and also ignored multiple requests for a refund.

The Ward County district court banned the Andersons from doing any contracting work for a minimum of five years, and until after they pay in full all consumers to whom they owe restitution, and also ordered them to pay civil penalties and attorney’s fees...


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OHIO

November 29, 2017

Children’s Charity and Its Telemarketer Accused of Bilking over $4.2 Million from Ohio Donors

(CLEVELAND)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against a purported children’s charity, its operators, and its fundraiser for allegedly defrauding Ohio donors and misleading them about how their money would be spent.

According to the lawsuit, Cops for Kids Inc. (also known as Ohio Cops for Kids) collected over $4.2 million in donations from Ohio residents between 2005 and 2015 but spent less than two percent of it on charitable programming, instead paying the vast majority — over $3.34 million — to its for-profit solicitor, Telcom Enterprises, and an additional $802,662 on salaries and overhead.

“Well-meaning Ohioans gave to Cops for Kids believing their dollars would help Ohio children or support local law enforcement. Instead, an overwhelming percentage of donations were kept by the group’s for-profit fundraiser or the men who operated it,” Attorney General DeWine said. “We believe Cops for Kids is a sham operation that has defrauded...


November 28, 2017

Columbus Used Car Seller Accused of Failing to Deliver Vehicle Titles

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a Columbus used car seller accused of failing to deliver vehicle titles to customers.

The lawsuit accuses Capital City Car Brokers LLC and owners Michael J. A. Boyd and Sherlin E. Boyd of violating Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act.

Since 2016, the Attorney General’s Office has received 16 complaints against Capital City Car
Brokers, which operates at 716 Sullivant Ave. in Columbus. In some cases, claims were paid from the state’s Title Defect Recision Fund to help consumers who bought a vehicle from the dealership but never received the title.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit seeks an end to any violations of the law, reimbursement to affected consumers, and reimbursement to the Title Defect Recision Fund.

Consumers who have title problems should contact the Ohio Attorney General’s Office at www.OhioProtects.org or 800-282-0515.


November 21, 2017

Dayton-Area Used Car Seller Accused of Failing to Deliver Vehicle Titles

(DAYTON, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a Dayton-area used car seller accused of failing to deliver vehicle titles to customers.

The lawsuit seeks reimbursement from South Dayton Auto & Truck Service LLC and owner Shane S. Smith, after claims totaling more than $16,200 were paid from the state’s Title Defect Recision Fund to help customers resolve title complaints against the dealership.

South Dayton Auto & Truck Service operates at 888 East Franklin Street in Centerville. Since 2014, 13 complaints have been filed against it, with some consumers saying they never received the title to a vehicle they bought from the dealership.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit accuses Smith and the dealership of violating Ohio’s Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act. It seeks an end to any violations of the law, reimbursement to affected consumers, and reimbursement to the Title Defect Recision Fund, which helps consumers when...


November 16, 2017

Cleveland-Area Man Accused of Using Nonprofits for Personal Gain

(CLEVELAND)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against a Beachwood man accused of misusing charitable assets.

The lawsuit accuses Kevin Ra, formerly known as Kevin Ramsey, of using his nonprofits – the Housing Court Assistance Program and, previously, the Greater Cleveland Housing Partnership – to benefit himself.

Through the nonprofits, Ra allegedly offers free assistance to homeowners facing violations in Ohio housing courts, but an investigation by the Attorney General’s Charitable Law Section found evidence that Ra used the nonprofits to buy and sell property and failed to use charitable assets for charitable purposes.

The lawsuit lists about $50,000 in questionable expenditures (such as cash withdrawals, car
payments, Amazon purchases, and restaurant payments) from the Greater Cleveland Housing Partnership’s bank accounts between 2012 and 2014. It also lists four times the nonprofit bought and then quickly sold property in Cleveland but apparently never received the proceeds. Filed in the Cuyahoga…


November 15, 2017

Akron-Area Man Accused of Providing Shoddy Home Repairs

(AKRON, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against an Akron-area man accused of failing to provide promised home improvement services to consumers.

According to the lawsuit, Neil Wolfe of Twinsburg and his company, Neil Construction Company, offered major home improvement services to consumers but performed shoddy or incomplete work after taking their money.

“We’re committed to protecting consumers, and when we find a pattern of problems, we do what we can to help people,” Attorney General DeWine said. “In this case, we’re seeking a court order to stop the bad actions and to require the defendant to pay back affected consumers.”

Nine northeast Ohio consumers who filed complaints about Wolfe’s company have reported paying a total of over $138,000 for services such as roof repairs, additions, and remodeling. Consumers complained that the contracts were overly long, that deadlines were missed, that work was shoddy, or that refunds were...


November 06, 2017

California Man Accused of Deceiving Ohioans in Mortgage Loan Modification Scheme

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a California man accused of taking thousands of dollars for loan modification services he never provided.

The lawsuit accuses Michael D. Grinnell of Los Angeles, and his companies, Equitable Century Group LLC and 1st Financial Associates LLC, of failing to help adjust consumers’ mortgages or provide refunds even after taking thousands of dollars in fees and offering a 100 percent money-back guarantee.

Four Ohio consumers who complained about Grinnell’s companies reported losses ranging from $6,500 to $16,000.

“People paid a lot of money but didn’t get results,” Attorney General DeWine said. “They also didn’t get their money back, even though they were promised full refunds. We’re seeking a court order to stop this scheme and to protect Ohio homeowners.”
According to the lawsuit, Grinnell and his companies called consumers offering to help negotiate loan modifications or other loan...


November 02, 2017

Lawsuit Seeks Reimbursement from Reynoldsburg Used Car Dealer Following Title Problems

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against Koco Jovanovski who operated under the name Remak Auto Sales for failing to deliver vehicle titles to customers.

The lawsuit seeks reimbursement from Jovanovski for the Title Defect Recision Fund (TDR), which helps reimburse consumers who experience title problems after buying a vehicle from a dealership. The lawsuit also seeks to prevent Jovanovski from obtaining a car dealer or salesperson license in the future.

According to the lawsuit, the now defunct Remak Auto Sales, which last operated at 13375 National Rd. SW in Reynoldsburg, failed to obtain certificates of title for cars it sold. The Attorney General's Office paid 44 claims to consumers totaling more than $106,000 from the TDR.

The lawsuit, filed in Licking County Court of Common Pleas, accuses Koco Jovanovski and Remak Auto Sales of violating Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act and Certificate of Motor Vehicle...


SOUTH DAKOTA

November 29, 2017

Texas Man Sentenced for Deceptive Trade Practices

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley announced today that Chad Michael Blair, 42, Houston, TX, formerly of Sioux Falls, was sentenced yesterday in 2nd Circuit Court to one count of deceptive trade practices and one count of odometer alteration. Blair was sentenced to 2 years in the state penitentiary with 2 years suspended. He was ordered to serve 30 days in the county jail to run concurrent to the misdemeanor odometer alterations charge. Blair was ordered to pay $3,375 in restitution, along with court costs and placed on probation for 2 years.

“Tampering with odometers in order to get more money for vehicles from innocent victims is wrong and illegal,” said Jackley. “We will continue to hold responsible individuals who take unfair advantage of consumers.”

The defendant formerly managed River Auto Sales, LLC, and in that capacity replaced high
mileage odometers in vehicles, with lower mileage odometers which he purchased from...


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**TEXAS**

November 13, 2017

**AG Paxton Files More Lawsuits Against Businesses Accused of Price Gouging During Hurricane Harvey**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today filed more price gouging lawsuits against businesses accused of taking advantage of Texans affected by Hurricane Harvey. In these cases, consumers were allegedly charged excessive prices for gasoline.

“Price gouging by unscrupulous profiteers is something that no Texan should have been confronted with during a declared disaster like Hurricane Harvey,” Attorney General Paxton said. “Price gouging is illegal, unconscionable and completely opposite the spirit of cooperation we saw just about everywhere else in our state before, during and after the hurricane. My office will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute more cases arising from Harvey.”

After a state disaster has been declared, as Governor Greg Abbott did on August 23, Texas law prohibits selling necessities such as drinking water, food, medicine, and fuel at an exorbitant or excessive price. Attorney General Paxton named the following defendants in Hurricane Harvey price gouging lawsuits:

Big Willy’s which has locations...


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November 03, 2017

**AG Paxton Continues Formal Investigation Into Equifax Data Breach Affecting 12.2 Million Texans**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that his office served an investigative subpoena – also known as a Civil Investigative Demand – on Equifax, one of the nation’s three major credit reporting agencies. Equifax reported a massive data breach affecting 145.5 million Americans, including 12.2 million Texans.

“My office seeks documents and other information from Equifax that will allow us to thoroughly examine all the facts and circumstances surrounding the massive data breach,” Attorney General Paxton said. “Our primary responsibility is to protect Texas consumers, who, through no fault of their own, had their personal and financial information compromised and are now vulnerable to identity theft.”

The Equifax breach lasted from mid-May through July of this year when hackers accessed names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some cases, driver’s license numbers. Around 209,000 individuals nationwide had their credit card numbers stolen. Equifax
didn’t reveal the breach until September. ...


**VIRGINIA**

November 30, 2017

**ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH OPEN-END CREDIT PLAN INTERNET LENDER WORTH MORE THAN $3 MILLION**

RICHMOND (November 30, 2017) - In his efforts to keep Virginia consumers safe, Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that his office has reached a settlement valued at more than $3 million with a Chicago-based open-end credit plan internet lender, Opportunity Financial, LLC ("Opportunity Financial"). Opportunity Financial has agreed, as part of the settlement, to provide refunds and debt forgiveness to over 4,000 consumers as a result of the company's alleged violations of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act (VCPA).

"My Predatory Lending Unit has made a concerted effort to review the practices of open-end credit plan lenders operating in Virginia to ensure that they are compliant with Virginia law," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "Today's settlement is another successful result against an open-end credit lender that will provide more than $3 million in relief to over 4,000 Virginia consumers. Credit lenders across the Commonwealth should know that...


**WASHINGTON**

November 28, 2017

**AG Ferguson files multi-million dollar lawsuit against Uber for failing to report massive data breach**

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today filed a multi-million dollar consumer protection lawsuit against ride sharing company Uber, alleging thousands of violations of the state’s data breach notification law. Uber discovered a data breach potentially affecting 57 million passengers and drivers around the world, including the names and driver’s license numbers of at least 10,888 Uber drivers in Washington.

Under a 2015 amendment to the state’s data breach law requested by Ferguson, consumers must be notified within 45 days of a breach, and the Attorney General’s Office also must be notified within 45 days if the breach affects 500 or more Washingtonians. This is the first
lawsuit filed under the revised statute. “Washington law is clear: When a data breach puts people at risk, businesses must inform them,” Ferguson said. “Uber’s conduct has been truly stunning. There is no excuse for keeping this information from consumers.”
The complaint, filed today in King...


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WEST VIRGINIA

November 20, 2017

Attorney General Morrisey Reaches Settlement, Bars Company From Selling Alarms in West Virginia

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey reached a settlement barring a home security system company from operating within the state due to its alleged use of fraudulent sales practices in violation of state law. The lawsuit stated Trio Alarm LLC and its manager, Tyler Ignatowski, engaged in deceptive sales practices across the Mountain State, despite being unlicensed to sell services in West Virginia. It alleges Trio Alarm employees went door-to-door selling home security systems and deceived consumers with high-pressure sales tactics. “Companies that deceive consumers for financial gain cannot be allowed to continue such practices in West Virginia,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Consumers should never be pressured into a purchase with deceit and fraud.” The settlement requires Trio Alarm and its owner pay $25,000. It also prohibits both from any future sales or marketing of security systems in West Virginia. The Attorney General’s actions also allowed more than...

Multistate Cases

Dissolution of Charity That Falsely Claimed to Help Veterans

**Date:** November 7, 2017

**Details:** Today it was announced a multistate settlement with VietNow National Headquarters, Inc., a charity that falsely claimed to help veterans. As part of the settlement, the organization will be dissolved and its funds will be distributed to two national and well-respected veterans charities, Fisher House Foundation and Operation Homefront. The settlement also places a permanent injunction on VietNow’s directors and officers, barring them from any future involvement in running a charity or soliciting donations.

**States include:**

1. Arizona  
2. California  
3. Connecticut  
4. Hawaii  
5. Illinois  
6. Iowa  
7. Kansas  
8. Kentucky  
9. Louisiana  
10. Maine  
11. Maryland  
12. Michigan  
13. Minnesota  
14. Missouri  
15. Nevada  
16. New Hampshire  
17. New Mexico  
18. New York  
19. North Dakota  
20. Ohio  
21. Oklahoma  
22. Oregon  
23. South Carolina  
24. Tennessee  
25. Virginia  
26. Washington  
27. Wisconsin

AGs Seek Authority to Name Additional Drug Manufacturers to Pending Multistate Lawsuit

**Date:** November 2, 2017

**Details:** A group of AGs are asking a federal judge for the authority to name additional drug manufacturers and drugs in its pending multistate lawsuit that alleges widespread collusion among pharmaceutical companies to reduce competition and increase the price of generic drugs.

If granted, the amended December 2016 lawsuit would increase the number of generic drug manufacturer defendants from six to 18 and the number of drugs at issue in the litigation from two to 15.
The states allege the actions by the companies violate both state and federal antitrust laws. The states are asking the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to require the companies correct the anticompetitive effects caused by their conduct, and calls for repayment of the companies’ “ill-gotten gains,” along with civil penalties to the states.

States include:

10. Florida 26. Montana 42. Utah
11. Hawaii 27. Nebraska 43. Vermont
15. Iowa 31. New Mexico 47. Wisconsin

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Tobacco Settlement Payment Dispute Finalized

**Date:** November 9, 2017

**Details:** Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that that his office has entered a final multistate settlement agreement that resolves a decade-old payment dispute under the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, the historic agreement with the tobacco industry.

**States include:**

1. North Carolina
GM Ignition Switch Settlement

Date: November 29, 2017

Details: The Wyoming Attorney General joined a settlement between the attorneys general of 49 states and the District of Columbia and General Motors Company (“GM”) over allegations that GM concealed safety issues related to ignition-switch-related defects in GM vehicles.

States include:

1. Wyoming

Medicaid Fraud

Four Charged in Multistate Healthcare Fraud Conspiracy

Date: November 17, 2017

Details: Florida’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Georgia and other federal and state partners announced the indictment of four individuals for healthcare fraud. The defendants face multiple counts of conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud and aggravated identify theft related to fraudulent claims filed with Florida, Georgia and Louisiana Medicaid programs. The four defendants owned or worked with companies that purportedly provided mental health counseling and treatment to children and adults.

States include:

1. Florida
2. Georgia
3. Louisiana

ARKANSAS

November 28, 2017

Rutledge Announces Jonesboro Man Sentenced for Medicaid Fraud

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Jonesboro man for Medicaid fraud and theft. Emmett Paul Milam pleaded guilty in Pulaski County Circuit Court and was sentenced to six years probation and must pay $90,941.10 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund, with $10,000 paid immediately, plus a $30,000 fine and exclusion from the Medicaid program for 5 years.
“Emmett Paul Milam scammed a vital safety net program for vulnerable Arkansans,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Putting a stop to this type of fraud is a top priority of my office. Attorneys and investigators at the Attorney General’s office continue to investigate these crimes and prosecute those who take advantage of the system and Arkansas residents. Milam, 37, of Jonesboro pleaded guilty to one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class B felony, and one count of theft of property by deception, a Class C...


November 15, 2017

Rutledge Announces Arrest of Two Men for
LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the arrest of one Pulaski County Man and one Drew County man. Nicholas Stephens, 32, of Monticello, was arrested by agents with the Attorney General’s Control Unit and Bradley and Drew County Sheriff’s Departments, and transported to the Warren Police Department. He is charged with one count of adult abuse of an impaired person, a Class D felony. His bond was set at $3,000. He is accused of abusing an impaired adult residing at the Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center in August 2016. Jimmie Bradley, 32, of Maumelle, was arrested by agents with the Attorney General’s Control Unit and transported to the Pulaski County Jail and later extradited to Bradley County. He is charged with one count of adult abuse of an impaired person, a Class D felony. His bond was set at $3,000. He is accused of...


November 07, 2017

Rutledge Announces Little Rock Woman Sentenced for Medicaid Theft
LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Little Rock woman for theft. Jene Wyatt pleaded guilty in Pulaski County District Court and has paid $1,438.56 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund. Wyatt will pay the same amount in fines to the General Fund of the State of Arkansas. “Jene Wyatt took advantage of an important safety net for vulnerable Arkansans,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Investigators and attorneys at the Attorney General’s office continue to work diligently to stop this type of fraud.” Wyatt, 39, of Little Rock pleaded guilty to Theft by Deception, a Class A misdemeanor for billing the Arkansas Medicaid Program for services not rendered in November and December 2016. This cases was referred to the MFCU by the Medicaid Inspector General and was prosecuted in cooperation with the Office of the 6th Judicial District Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley. ...

November 03, 2017

**Rutledge Announces Arrest of Helena-West Helena Man for Medicaid Fraud**

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

Brett Aaron Ford, 34, of Helena-West Helena, was arrested by agents with the Attorney General’s Control Unit and transported to the Pulaski County Sheriff’s Department. He is charged with one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class C felony. He is accused of fraudulently retaining Medicaid payments for services not rendered, totaling $311.04 in August 2015.

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


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**FLORIDA**

November 17, 2017

**PlayBig Owner Arrested for Racketeering and Medicaid Provider Fraud**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Control Unit and the Leon County Sheriff’s Office today arrested Rachel Scharlepp, owner of PlayBig Therapy & Recreation Zone LLC, for racketeering and Medicaid provider fraud.

Scharlepp, 34, allegedly hired and utilized unqualified employees to provide targeted case management to children, including children not qualified to receive such services. According to the MFCU investigation, Scharlepp falsely certified seven targeted case managers who lacked the required one year of full-time experience working with children with serious emotional disturbances. Scharlepp also allegedly certified unqualified children to receive targeted case management services. The children either had no mental health disability; already possessed a natural support system for accessing needed medical, social and educational services; or had no documented risk of out-of-home mental health treatment placement.

Scharlepp faces one count of racketeering, a first-degree felony, two counts of Medicaid provider fraud more than $10,000, second-degree felonies, and five counts of...

IDAHO
November 09, 2017
Idaho Falls Woman Sentenced for
(Boise) - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has announced the successful prosecution of a Bonneville County woman for defrauding the Idaho Medicaid Program.
On Wednesday, Seventh District Judge Darren B. Simpson sentenced 33-year-old Tiffany A. Larsen of Idaho Falls after she pleaded guilty on September 21 to executing a scheme. Judge Simpson sentenced Larsen to two years fixed and up to five years in prison. The court suspended the prison sentence and ordered Larsen to immediately serve 75 days in the Bonneville County Jail, pay $1,431 in restitution and perform 100 hours of community service. She was also placed on probation for five years.
An investigation determined the defendant submitted a series of falsified progress notes that were used as a basis to submit claims for services through Larsen’s employer, Qualicare. The company discovered and reported the fraud to authorities. The company has returned all Medicaid payments associated with the fraud and...


KANSAS
November 13, 2017
Johnson County woman ordered to repay $6,000 for
OLATHE – (November 13, 2017) – A Johnson County woman was ordered last week to repay more than $6,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after being found guilty of, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.
Constance L. Ferreira, 61, pleaded guilty in August to one felony count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program. Johnson County District Court Judge Timothy P. McCarthy last week ordered Ferreira to repay $6,460.14 to the Kansas Medicaid Program. Judge McCarthy also sentenced her to 12 months of probation with an underlying sentence of nine 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.
Ferreira was a personal care attendant to a disabled Medicaid eligible beneficiary. An investigation revealed that Ferreira billed Medicaid for services she claimed she...

LOUISIANA

November 16, 2017

**Five Arrested in Louisiana for Medicaid Welfare Fraud**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Attorney General Jeff Landry today announced the arrests of five Louisiana residents on Medicaid welfare fraud charges.

“My Control Unit works tirelessly to fight fraud, waste, and abuse in this welfare program that helps our State’s neediest,” said General Landry. “Louisiana’s Medicaid program costs billions of taxpayer dollars so we will continue doing all we legally can to ensure the people’s hard-earned money is not being stolen.”

James Poree, 24 of Des Allemands, was arrested on four counts of for allegedly submitting time sheets and service logs for services not rendered.

Andrea Alexander, 31 of Marrero, was arrested on three counts of for allegedly submitting time sheets and service logs for services not rendered.

Stephanie Lavine, 38 of Opelousas, was arrested on three counts of for allegedly submitting time sheets and service logs for services not rendered.

Tanika Pitts, 39 of Baton...

➤ Original Press Release: [https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3491?catID=5](https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/3491?catID=5)

NEVADA

November 06, 2017

**Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Home Health Worker**

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Babak Razzaghi-Shishavan, 39, of Las Vegas, was sentenced today in a case involving the failure to maintain proper documentation for services provided to a Medicaid recipient.

Babak was sentenced for a gross misdemeanor offense of Intentional Failure to Maintain Adequate Records by District Court Judge Stefany Miley. Judge Miley sentenced Babak to 180 days incarceration, suspended, 100 hours of community service and payment of $11,324.00 in restitution. Babak was placed on 3 years probation. The fraud occurred between February 2016 and December 2016.

“These convictions ensure that Medicaid recipients who receive much needed services in their homes are actually getting those services,” said Laxalt.

The investigation began after the Control Unit (MFCU) received information that Babak was not providing personal care services to a Medicaid recipient. The investigation revealed that Babak did knowingly create fictitious documentation, including...

NEW YORK

November 30, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea And Conviction Of Private-Duty Nurse Who Stole Over $27,000 From Medicaid

HAMBURG - Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the guilty plea of Licensed Practical Nurse Liane P. Tomlinson, 33, of Hamburg, New York, for stealing over $27,000 from Medicaid. An investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s Office revealed that over the course of 17 months, Tomlinson submitted false claims for private-duty nursing services that she never provided to six disabled children.

Today, Tomlinson pleaded guilty before the Honorable Kenneth F. Case in Erie County Court to Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a Class E felony. Tomlinson now faces probation or 1 to 4 years in state prison. Tomlinson will be sentenced on March 16, 2018 and must pay $27,186.46 in restitution to the NYS Restitution Fund.

“My office remains committed to protecting our Medicaid system and the vulnerable New Yorkers who rely on it, said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Anyone attempting to profit by gaming the system...


November 17, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Indictment Against Pharmacy Owner, Pharmacist, And Three Pharmacies For Allegedly Defrauding Medicaid Of Over $3 Million

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the indictment of Hin T. Wong (“Wong”), 49, of Manhattan, Mery Gooden, 58, of the Bronx, and three pharmacies. The indictment charges Wong, the owner of three Manhattan pharmacies – New York Pharmacy Inc. (“NY Pharmacy”), NYC Pharmacy Inc. (“NYC Pharmacy”), and New York Healthfirst Pharmacy Inc. (“NY Healthfirst”) – for defrauding several government-funded healthcare programs, including Medicaid and Medicare, by falsely billing prescription refills and stealing over $3 million in reimbursement for medication they did not dispense. Wong was indicted for Grand Larceny in the First Degree, a class “B” felony, and other crimes. In addition, Mery Gooden, a pharmacist at NYC Pharmacy, was indicted for Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and other related crimes.

“Pharmacists’ most important duty must be to the welfare of their patients – not lining their own pockets,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “The blatant...

November 15, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Sentencing Of Binghamton-Area Transport Company And Owners For Stealing From Medicaid And Failing To Secure Workers’ Compensation Insurance

BINGHAMTON – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today the sentencings of Kenneth Cohn, Sharon Cohn, and Yellow Medi-Van and Taxi, Inc., for stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars in Medicaid funds and knowingly operating transportation services without Worker’s Compensation insurance. At sentencing in Broome County Court, the Cohns forfeited and released $455,604 currently being withheld by the New York State Department of Health, to the Attorney General’s Control Unit. Each defendant also agreed to pay $50,000 in restitution, for a total of $100,000. Kenneth Cohn was sentenced to five years’ probation, and Sharon Cohn was sentenced to one year conditional discharge. Yellow Medi-Van and Taxi, Inc. was sentenced to three years conditional discharge.

“These defendants defrauded Medicaid at the expense of their employees’ safety and New York taxpayers. We’ll continue to hold accountable those that seek to game the system and defraud New Yorkers,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. ...


November 09, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Sentencing Of Rochester Man For Stealing From And Defrauding Medicaid

ROCHESTER—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the sentencing of Nicholas Rice, of Rochester, NY. Rice stole over $6,000 from Medicaid by submitting false timesheets claiming that he provided home care services to a disabled Medicaid recipient. An investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s office uncovered that Rice was not present to render the services that he purported to provide. Rice will now serve 1 1/2 to 3 years in state prison.

“When crooks steal from Medicaid, they’re stealing money from New York taxpayers and exploiting those who depend on the program’s vital services,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “My office will prosecute those who misuse the Medicaid system and take advantage of the disabled for their personal financial gain.”

The Attorney General’s investigation, conducted by the Control Unit (MFCU), revealed that Rice submitted false timesheets to Maxim Healthcare and received payment for services that he did not provide to a...

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Jail Sentence For Registered Nurse Convicted Of Stealing Over $390,000 From Medicaid

WESTCHESTER - Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the guilty plea of registered nurse Collins Anyanwu-Mueller, 47, for stealing over $390,000 from Medicaid. An investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s Office revealed that over the course of nearly five years, Anyanwu-Mueller submitted false claims for private duty nursing services that he never provided to two severely disabled patients.

Today, Anyanwu-Mueller pleaded guilty in Westchester County Court in White Plains before the Honorable Barry H. Warhit to Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D Felony. He will be sentenced on February 22, 2018 to one year in jail and agreed to pay $392,954.00 in restitution.

“The Medicaid home care program is meant to provide severely disabled New Yorkers with the care they need,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Fraudsters who rip off this vital program by using it as a personal piggy bank will be caught and prosecuted.”

The Attorney General’s Medicaid...

NORTH CAROLINA

November 13, 2017

Attorney General Josh Stein Announces Health Care Fraud Conviction

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein announced today that Ashley Sawyer pled guilty to Attempted Medicaid Provider Fraud in Wake County and was sentenced to 30 days in jail (suspended) and 12 months unsupervised probation. Ms. Sawyer also was ordered to pay $8,241.16 in restitution to her employer and court costs.

“Billing Medicaid for services not rendered pushes up the cost of the program and wastes taxpayer money,” said Attorney General Stein. “My office will not allow this type of abuse to occur.”

Ashley Sawyer’s conviction resolves allegations that she submitted timesheets outlining speech therapy and treatment services to 13 Medicaid recipients in Pitt County between January 9, 2015 and September 18, 2015. Ms. Sawyer did not provide those services. Her employer has reimbursed the Medicaid program for those false claims; Ms. Sawyer will repay her employer. Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman also helped to obtain this conviction.

About the Medicaid Investigations...


OKLAHOMA

November 01, 2017

Attorney General Hunter Charges Nursing Home Caretaker with Financial Exploitation

OKLAHOMA CITY - Attorney General Mike Hunter has charged a certified nurse aide with four counts of financial exploitation by a caretaker and one count of engaging in a pattern of criminal offenses.

An investigation by the attorney general’s Control Unit discovered Tracy Borman, 41, of Mannford, allegedly used an elderly resident’s debit card to withdraw cash from a bank account and make other unauthorized purchases, while she was working at North County Nursing and Rehabilitation, a nursing home and senior living center, located in Collinsville.

According to court records, Borman made purchases from retail stores, gas stations, payments to utility companies and ATM withdraws, between Nov. 2016 and Feb. 2017. ...


PENNSYLVANIA

November 30, 2017

Attorney General Josh Shapiro Announces Arrest of Erie Aide who Poured Scalding Water on Disabled Patient Causing Severe Burns

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced felony charges today against an Erie man for pouring scalding water on a mentally disabled man and severely burning him in an Erie facility.

Akeem Nixon, 26, of German Street, Erie, was charged with neglect of a care-dependent person and aggravated assault -- first-degree felonies -- as a result of the incident. The victim was hospitalized for 17 days and suffered second-degree burns over 20 percent of his body.

“This defendant assaulted a disabled man in his care with scalding water,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “We’re going to hold him accountable for this criminal conduct. We’re using every resource at our disposal to protect care-dependent Pennsylvanians.”

Nixon poured scalding water on the man living at Lakeshore Community Services in Erie while Nixon was employed as a direct support aide at the residential home for intellectually disabled persons. Nixon was suspended from his job the day after...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=4198
Consumer Advocacy

Western Union Settlement Fund Deadline for Eligible Consumer Claims

Date: November 14, 2017

Details: Consumers may be eligible to file for a claim if they were a victim of a fraud-induced transfer using Western Union between January 1, 2004 and January 19, 2017.

Claim forms should be mailed from the settlement administrator within the next two weeks to affected consumers who reported the fraudulent transactions to the Attorney General’s Office or to Western Union. The forms will contain instructions explaining how consumers may file their claims to receive compensation.

In addition to consumer compensation, the settlement also required Western Union to develop and put into action a comprehensive anti-fraud program designed to help detect and prevent incidents where consumers who have been the victims of fraud use Western Union to wire money to scam artists.

States include:

1. Alabama
2. Alaska
3. Arizona
4. Arkansas
5. Delaware
6. Florida
7. Georgia
8. Idaho
9. Illinois
10. Iowa
11. Kansas
12. Kentucky
13. Maine
14. Maryland
15. Mississippi
16. Missouri
17. Montana
18. Nebraska
19. Nevada
20. New Hampshire
21. New Jersey
22. New Mexico
23. New York
24. North Carolina
25. Ohio
26. Pennsylvania
27. South Carolina
28. South Dakota
29. Texas
30. Vermont
31. Virginia
AGs Letter Against Borrow Defense Rule Delay  
**Date:** November 24, 2017  
**Details:** Attorneys general from 19 states sent letter to DOE objecting to a proposed rulemaking, which would delay until July 1, 2019 the effective date of numerous provisions of the Borrower Defense Rule. They contend the rule would harm borrowers and serve no legitimate purpose.  

**Press Release:**  
[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_11/Multistate_Comments-on-BDR-Delay-NPRM.PDF](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_11/Multistate_Comments-on-BDR-Delay-NPRM.PDF)

**States include:**  
1. California  
2. Connecticut  
3. Delaware  
4. Hawaii  
5. Illinois  
6. Iowa  
7. Maine  
8. Maryland  
9. Massachusetts  
10. Minnesota  
11. New Mexico  
12. New York  
13. North Carolina  
14. Oregon  
15. Pennsylvania  
16. Rhode Island  
17. Vermont  
18. Virginia  
19. Washington

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Coalition Supporting President Trump’s Appointment of a Temporary CFPB Director  
**Date:** November 27, 2017  
**Details:** Coalition of eight states filed an Amicus Brief with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in support of President Trump’s legal authority to name an acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) until a permanent director is nominated and confirmed.  

**States include:**  
1. Alabama  
2. Arkansas  
3. Georgia  
4. Louisiana  
5. Oklahoma  
6. South Carolina  
7. Texas (second press release)  
8. West Virginia
44 AGs join to Restore DEA Authority

Date: November 14, 2017

Details: The National Association of Attorneys General policy letter to congressional leaders, signed by 44 attorney generals, urges the repeal of a 2016 federal law to restore the Drug Enforcement Administration’s ability to hold drug manufacturers and distributors of opioids accountable.

The Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2016 severely limits the DEA’s response to the opioid crisis. In 2016, more than two million Americans had an addiction to prescription or illicit opioids. Since 2000, more than 300,000 Americans have died from overdoses involving opioids.

According to the NAAG letter, the Act effectively strips the DEA’s ability to issue an immediate suspension order against a drug manufacturer or distributor whose unlawful conduct poses an immediate danger to public health or safety.


States and Territories include:

1. Alabama
2. Alaska
3. California
4. Colorado
5. Connecticut
6. Delaware
7. District of Columbia
8. Florida
9. Georgia
10. Hawaii
11. Idaho
12. Illinois
13. Indiana
14. Iowa
15. Kentucky
16. Louisiana
17. Maine
18. Maryland
19. Massachusetts
20. Michigan
21. Minnesota
22. Mississippi
23. Missouri
24. Montana
25. Nebraska
26. Nevada
27. New Hampshire
28. New Jersey
29. New Mexico
30. New York
31. North Carolina
32. North Dakota
33. Ohio
34. Oklahoma
35. Oregon
36. Pennsylvania
37. Rhode Island
38. South Carolina
39. South Dakota
40. Vermont
41. Virgin Islands
42. Virginia
43. Washington
44. West Virginia
Success in Effort to Have FCC Allow Phone Companies to Block Illegal Robocalls

Date: November 17, 2017

Details: Following a letter sent in July by 30 attorneys general, the Federal Communications Commission adopted rules to allow phone companies to block illegal robocalls. Regulatory roadblocks had prevented telecommunications companies from blocking many illegal robocalls. This new rule will allow providers to block calls coming from invalid numbers, unassigned numbers and numbers whose owners have requested be blocked. For example, phone providers would be able to block a scammer that is using a telephone number that clearly cannot exist because it has not been assigned by a telephone provider to a user.

Letter is available at:
https://www.arkansasag.gov/site/assets/files/3690/state_ag_comment_on_fcc_proposed_robocall_rule.pdf

States include:
1. Arkansas
2. Arizona

Coalition in Opposition to Tribune-Sinclair Merger

Date: November 2, 2017

Details: A multistate group of attorneys general joined in filing comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) opposing the proposed merger between the Tribune Media Company (Tribune) and Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc. (Sinclair). The attorneys general argue the potential merger fails to further the public interest by allowing for increased consolidation that will decrease consumer choices and a diversity of voices in the media marketplace.

The Tribune/Sinclair merger would create the largest television broadcast company in the country. The merged company would own or operate over 200 stations nationwide with the ability to reach 72 percent of U.S. television households, far above the statutory 39 percent limit.

States include:
1. Illinois
2. Maryland
3. Massachusetts
ARKANSAS

November 30, 2017

Rutledge Urges Arkansas Public Service Commission to Pursue a Balanced Net Metering Pricing Policy

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced she is recommending a net metering rule change to the Arkansas Public Service Commission. Net metering is a bill credit that customers may receive if they have a distributed energy system, such as rooftop solar energy, which generates excess energy. That excess energy can subsequently be put back into the overall electrical system for all customers.

“I support the individual use of rooftop solar and other renewable technologies, but urge the commission to set a bill credit rate using the same methods it uses to set utility rates for all customers,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The changes I recommend are designed to avoid placing an undue burden on other electricity customers. Continuing the current credit structure would provide financial benefits for net metering customers on the backs of hardworking Arkansans who cannot or do not install individual use renewable technologies. This...


CALIFORNIA

November 27, 2017

In Preparation for Giving Tuesday, Attorney General Becerra Provides Tips To Avoid Fraudsters

SACRAMENTO — Ahead of Giving Tuesday, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today provided tips to Californians on how to avoid becoming the victim of charity scams. The California Attorney General has the primary responsibility for supervising charities and the professional fundraisers who solicit on their behalf. Under Government Code section 12598, the Attorney General may investigate and bring legal actions against charities that misuse charitable assets or engage in fraudulent fundraising practices.

“As Californians give back to our communities this holiday season, it’s important to ensure the charities that support causes near and dear to our hearts are the real deal,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Unfortunately, some bad actors will try to take advantage of this generosity. I urge all Californians to be vigilant and do a little research to ensure that their charitable giving...
goes directly to those who need the help and not to unscrupulous scam artists.” ...


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**COLORADO**

November 01, 2017

**AG Coffman Announces the Launch of the First Annual Colorado Consumer Protection Month**

DENVER- Today Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced the launch of the first annual Colorado Consumer Protection Month (CCPM). This new initiative will focus on raising awareness and providing education about consumer fraud issues including common scams, financial abuses, and fraud affecting Coloradans across the state. The Colorado Attorney General’s Office is partnering with law enforcement, regulatory entities, and non-profit programs statewide to help Coloradans learn how to identify, prevent, and report fraudulent activity. A proclamation supporting and declaring November as Colorado Consumer Protection Month was signed by Gov. Hickenlooper.

“We want to send a clear message that scammers and fraudsters are not welcome in Colorado,” said Attorney General Coffman. “Colorado Consumer Protection Month is designed to help arm consumers across our state with the information and resources they need to protect themselves from bad actors, and to know how and where to report any possible fraud they may encounter.” ...


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**CONNECTICUT**

November 21, 2017

**AG Jepsen Announces New Head of Privacy & Data Security Department**

Attorney General George Jepsen today announced that he has named Assistant Attorney General Jeremy Pearlman as head of his office's Privacy and Data Security Department. Pearlman succeeds former Assistant Attorney General Matthew Fitzsimmons, who recently left the Office of the Attorney General for a position in the private sector. As department head, Pearlman will oversee all investigations, multistate work and litigation within the office involving data privacy and security matters, including new and pending data breach investigations.

"We are grateful to Matt Fitzsimmons for his many years of service to the state of Connecticut and the leadership he brought to the very important privacy enforcement work of state attorneys general," said Attorney General Jepsen. "In his more than a decade of service to the Office of the Attorney General, Jeremy Pearlman has distinguished himself with his
thoughtfulness, his excellent judgment and his superb ability to manage complex legal matters. Connecticut is a...


November 17, 2017

**Consumer Alert: Beware Healthcare Scams during Open Enrollment**

State officials today are warning Connecticut residents to look out for scammers using federal open enrollment periods to lure consumers into buying fake health plans or otherwise obtain personal or financial information, Attorney General George Jepsen, state Department of Insurance Commissioner Katharine Wade and Jim Wadleigh, CEO of Access Health CT, said today.

Their alert comes after an email scam was reported to the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Insurance. The email purported to offer "TrumpCare-AHCA" plans to Connecticut residents through a sham Web site and phone number. "AHCA" refers to the federal American Health Care Act, which was not passed by Congress and is not in effect. "Scammers are using the confusion over the federal healthcare debate to try to victimize consumers during the current open enrollment periods," Attorney General Jepsen said. "It is an unfortunate reality that scammers frequently use current events to take advantage of...


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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

November 16, 2017

**Attorney General Racine’s Statement on Richard Cordray Stepping Down from Consumer Financial Protection Bureau**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today released the below statement in response to the announcement by Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Director Richard Cordray that he planned to step down from his position, which he has held since shortly after the CFPB began operations in 2011.

“Rich Cordray has been a true champion for District consumers, working people, and vulnerable residents across the United States,” Attorney General Racine said. “Under his leadership, the CFPB has been a key partner to our office and other state attorneys general in protecting consumers from abuses by banks, payday lenders, debt collectors, and other financial-services companies. With more than $11 billion in recoveries and relief for consumers and more than $440 million ordered to be paid in fines and penalties thanks to CFPB’s enforcement work, Director Cordray’s leadership and results speak for themselves. I urge President Trump to nominate a successor to...

Attorney General Bondi Offers Giving Tips Ahead of Giving Tuesday

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Bondi is releasing tips for charitable giving ahead of Giving Tuesday. Encouraging generosity following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday is a day recognized around the world that is devoted to giving back. While the holiday season often inspires many to be kind and give to a good cause, scammers may seek to take advantage of the kindness of others.

“‘Giving Tuesday’ is an important time to support charities working to improve the lives of others, and helping those less fortunate is especially important during the holiday season—BUT before you donate, make sure the charity you are giving to is legitimate and not a scam,” said Attorney General Bondi.

Here are some tips to safeguard against charity-related scams this holiday season:

- Research a charity by using Charity Navigator to confirm the charity is legitimate;
- Understand how much of the donation will actually go toward the work of…

November 21, 2017

Attorney General Bondi Releases 2017 Holiday Shopping Guide

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—As Black Friday approaches, kicking off the time for Holiday shopping, Attorney General Pam Bondi is releasing the 2017 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide. This helpful guide provides product safety information and tips to help consumers enjoy a safer and more satisfying holiday shopping experience.

“As Floridians prepare their holiday shopping lists, they should also take steps to protect their financial information and guard against scams,” said Attorney General Bondi. “The 2017 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide is full of tips to help shoppers avoid identity theft and scams. It also includes safety information about children’s gifts, so parents can do their research before Black Friday and Cyber Monday.”

In the guide, consumers can find online purchasing tips and advice for avoiding charity scams. Additionally, the guide includes a list of items recalled by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission in the past year, specifically focusing on children’s toys and items that pose…

Original Press Release:
http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/96A10790BCFBA4BF852581DF0069F06C
November 20, 2017

Deadline Approaches to File Claims in Avis, Budget and Payless Settlement

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi is reminding consumers who rented a car from Avis, Budget or Payless between Jan. 1, 2010 to July 10, 2017 and were charged for e-Toll services to file a claim before the January deadline. The deadline to submit a claim is Jan. 7, 2018. Refund checks will be mailed in March 2018 to eligible claimants wrongfully charged for e-Toll services.

For more information about the claims process and to access the claim form, click here.

In July this year, Attorney General Bondi’s Office reached a settlement with Avis Budget Car Rental System, LLC, which owns Avis, Budget and Payless. The settlement resolves allegations related to the rental car companies’ practices involving add-on fees for cashless tolls in Florida and other related add-on charges. As part of the settlement, the three companies are required to provide refunds to any consumers charged for e-Toll without sufficient disclosures, who have...


GEORGIA

November 27, 2017

CONSUMER ALERT: Carr and Kemp Warn Georgians About Football Ticket Scams Ahead of SEC Championship

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr and Secretary of State Brian Kemp today warned football fans about ticket scams in preparation for this Saturday’s SEC Championship game between the University of Georgia and the University of Auburn. Not surprisingly, the SEC recently stated that the game is sold out and fans will be trying to buy tickets on the secondary market. This creates an opportunity for scammers to exploit consumers through the sale of fake, void or stolen tickets. Not only can consumers lose money in these scams, they may also become victims of identity theft if they give a scammer their personal or financial information.

“Football fans, Secretary of State Brian Kemp and I share your excitement to watch UGA battle it out on the gridiron against Auburn,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “If you are making preparations to attend the big game, we want to be sure...


November 20, 2017

Carr: Consumers, Shop Wisely this Holiday Season

ATLANTA, GA - Attorney General Chris Carr is providing the following tips for holiday shoppers.
“The way we are making holiday purchases is changing with more sales being made and processed on our phones, tablets and laptops,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “In fact, 59 percent of consumers are planning to buy gifts online this holiday season. As our consumer landscape shifts, it is more important than ever to protect your wallet and your identity, and we are offering the following tips to remember while shopping this holiday season.”

Take precautions when making online transactions with an unfamiliar business. To avoid scams, do your online shopping through reputable, well-known websites. Be leery of ads on social media. You can check out a company’s reputation through the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org.

Credit cards offer greater protections against fraud than cash, checks or debit cards. If a transaction turns out to be fraudulent ...


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**ILLINOIS**

November 22, 2017

**MADIGAN CONDEMNS FCC ROLLBACK OF NET NEUTRALITY PROTECTIONS**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today condemned Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai’s plan to roll back existing net neutrality rules that prohibit internet service providers (ISPs) from discriminating among consumers and content providers. Madigan argues the rollback will result in consumers losing internet freedom to visit and obtain content from any site of their choice without interference.

The FCC’s Restoring Internet Freedom Order, publicly released today, is expected to eliminate prohibitions that allow people to have sole discretion over their internet usage. The order will allow internet service providers to interfere with customers’ use of the internet by blocking or slowing down access to content. If approved, the order will allow broadband providers to favor their own content over third-party sites by slowing down access. In addition, service providers could charge content providers for priority treatment or access to an internet “fast lane.”

“ Asking consumers to trust that their ...


November 21, 2017

**MADIGAN RELEASES 10th ANNIVERSARY HOLIDAY SAFE SHOPPING GUIDE**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today released her 10th Anniversary Safe Shopping Guide highlighting hazardous toys, children’s products and household items that have been recalled over the past year to help Illinois families ensure a safe holiday shopping season. Madigan’s 2017 Safe Shopping Guide includes detailed descriptions and photographs of
children’s products recalled in the last year – from popular children’s toys and games that pose choking hazards to children’s furniture and playsets that pose entrapment or falling risks. Since January, there have been 68 recalls of children’s products by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. This easy-to-use resource can help families avoid recalled products on the second-hand market and items that may already be in their homes.

“I’m proud my office has helped busy and overwhelmed parents make sure their homes are free of unsafe toys and products for the past 10 years,” Madigan said. “I am confident the 2017...

➤ Original Press Release:

November 07, 2017
ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: LEGISLATURE ACTS TO HELP STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS
Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the bipartisan coalition of representatives from the Illinois House of Representatives for voting to override Governor Rauner's veto of the Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights. Rauner vetoed the legislation, which was passed to stop the abuses of the student loan servicing industry that have made it more difficult and more expensive for Illinois borrowers to repay their loans.

The Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights was drafted by Madigan's office and sponsored by Sen. Daniel Biss and Rep. Will Guzzardi to address widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry. These abuses were revealed by thousands of student borrower complaints to Madigan's office and verified by Madigan's investigation into Navient, one of the country's largest student loan servicing companies. The House overrode Gov. Rauner's veto by a bipartisan vote of 98-16, and the law will go into effect Dec. 31, 2018.

"Student...

➤ Original Press Release:

IOWA
November 16, 2017
Miller Applauds FCC for Clearing Way to Stop Rampant Illegal Robocalling and Call Spoofing
DES MOINES – Attorney General Tom Miller applauded the Federal Communications Commission’s move today that clears the way for phone companies to block certain types of calls that are likely fraudulent, which is the top consumer complaint in Iowa and nationwide. The FCC approved new rules that allow telecommunications providers to block robocalls that appear to be from telephone numbers that do not or cannot make outgoing calls, without running afoul of the FCC’s call completion rules.

“This is something that I, along with my colleagues in other states, loudly and clearly asked the FCC to do, and I’m really pleased the Commission listened,” Miller said. “Iowans call our office
every single day to complain about these fraudulent calls they get every day,” Miller added. “Thousands and thousands of Iowans have been scammed out of money because their caller ID display backed up what the caller told them—for example, that the IRS...


**KANSAS**

November 17, 2017

**AG Derek Schmidt: FCC approves rules to block robocalls from fake phone numbers**

TOPEKA – (November 17, 2017) – A new rule adopted yesterday by the Federal Communications Commission will allow telephone providers to block calls originating from certain fake phone numbers, a move aimed at reducing the amount of robocalls consumers receive, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Schmidt, along with a bipartisan coalition of 29 other state attorneys general, submitted a comment letter in July in support of the new rules, which will allow providers to block several types of “spoofed” calls, in which a call appears to be coming from one number, but is actually coming from a different number. Scammers frequently use spoofed calls to hide their identity and to trick consumers into believing that their calls are legitimate. The use of these spoofed numbers is particularly prevalent in scams where the caller pretends to be calling from the Internal Revenue Service, law enforcement agencies or utility companies.

Under the new...


**KENTUCKY**

November 29, 2017

**Beshear Warns of ‘Mystery Shopper’ Seasonal Employment Scam**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 29, 2017) – Kentuckians looking to make extra money in time for the Christmas season need to watch out for seasonal employment scams, according to Attorney General Andy Beshear.

Beshear said his office issued a scam alert today after receiving multiple reports from Kentuckians who said they responded to a seasonal mystery shopper job advertisement that turned out to be a scam. A resident in Scott County reported losing $2,000 to the scam this week.

While there are reputable companies that do hire mystery shoppers Beshear’s Office of Senior Protection recommends avoiding any ad, email or website that requires an advance payment to
gain access to information on how to become a mystery shopper. “Legitimate companies do not require you to make an advance payment to obtain employment as a mystery shopper,” Beshear said. “Kentuckians must always remain vigilant about scams, especially job scams during the Christmas season when con...

November 01, 2017

**Buyer Beware: Tractor, Truck Sale Ads Ripe with Con Artists**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 1, 2017) – Today, a scam alert was issued by Attorney General Andy Beshear to warn Kentuckians about fraudulent advertisements placed in the classified section of local Kentucky newspapers and online.

Beshear said Kentuckians in several counties including Bath, Barren, Franklin and Jefferson have reported replying to classified ads for a deeply discounted John Deere tractor, Toyota or Chevrolet pickup truck that turned out to be a scam.

The complainants state that the classified ad appears normal at first and includes a price for the item and a contact phone number. Once an interested buyer places a call, however, they do not speak with anyone, but rather start receiving text messages or emails from a so-called Air Force Sergeant “Molly Carter” stationed at Cavalier AFB in North Dakota.

“Carter” claims she is selling the item at a deep discount because it belonged to her late husband, and she is leaving...

**LOUISIANA**

November 28, 2017

**Do Not Get Scammed During Open Enrollment**

BATON ROUGE, LA – With the open enrollment deadline quickly approaching, many Louisiana consumers are on the lookout for new health insurance plans; and Attorney General Jeff Landry is encouraging them, especially the elderly, to protect themselves from scammers looking to steal their information.

“Research shows that Americans ages 65 and older are the prime targets of scams and receive more mail and telephone solicitations than any other age group,” said General Landry. “So our office is doing all we can to educate seniors about the real threat of elder fraud and help all consumers from falling victim to scams.”

Ahead of the December 15 open enrollment deadline, General Landry is offering the following tips to consumers looking for a new health insurance plan:

Medicare
· There are no Medicare sales representatives. If someone comes to your door attempting to sell insurance, it is a scam.
· The Medicare prescription drug plan (also known as...


November 22, 2017
Cyber Monday Safety Tips Offered by Attorney General Jeff Landry
BATON ROUGE, LA – Ahead of Cyber Monday shopping, Attorney General Jeff Landry is encouraging consumers to be mindful of the deals they take part in.
“Online shopping is a great way to avoid crowded stores on Black Friday; however, shoppers should be diligent in vetting websites to ensure their authenticity,” said General Landry. “On Cyber Monday, and every day, it is important for consumers to practice safe online behavior and take the appropriate steps to protect themselves from scams.”
In recent years, Cyber Monday has gained momentum as shoppers forego Thanksgiving and Black Friday deals and turn to the convenience of online shopping. Unfortunately, not all advertised deals are what they claim to be, and some websites may be phony or tools for scammers to take advantage. So General Landry is offering the following tips to Louisiana’s online shoppers:
Avoid online financial transactions while using public wireless networks. Do not conduct...


November 08, 2017
Do Not Get Spoofed By Scammers
BATON ROUGE, LA – Caller ID lets consumers avoid unwanted phone calls by displaying caller names and phone numbers, but Attorney General Jeff Landry warns that the caller ID feature can be manipulated by spoofers who masquerade as representatives of banks, creditors, insurance companies, or even the government.
“Caller ID spoofing, which is the practice of changing the caller ID to any number other than the one actually calling, is on the uptick in Louisiana,” said General Landry. “My office and I want to be sure Louisiana citizens know about this scam and learn how to avoid becoming victim to it.”
General Landry encourages consumers to stay ahead of spoofers by following these tips for unexpected calls:
If you get a strange call from a government phone number, hang up. If you want to check it out, visit the official (.gov) website for contact information.
Do not give out – or confirm...


November 02, 2017
Veterans Consumer Alert: Stay Empowered to Fight Scams and Fraud
BATON ROUGE, LA – Veterans Day is a time to honor the brave men and women of America
who have sacrificed, fought, and – in some cases – gave their lives to defend this great nation. While our nation formally shows its appreciation for these great American heroes next week, Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry today reminds citizens that there are fraudsters aiming to prey on veterans and service members alike.

“Our nation owes a great debt of gratitude to military service members, veterans, and their families. It is despicable that anyone would seek to take advantage of those who have sacrificed so much for us,” said General Landry. “As a veteran, I joined many of our nation’s finest to protect our rights and freedoms. And as Attorney General, I will continue doing all that I legally can to protect the military community from criminals targeting them with scams.” Unfortunately, veterans and...


MAINE
November 30, 2017
Attorney General Janet Mills seeks volunteer mediators
AUGUSTA – Are you interested in helping Maine consumers resolve disputes with businesses? The Attorney General’s Office is recruiting volunteer mediators for the Consumer Mediation Service, with the next training scheduled for January 29-31 in Augusta. For more than 30 years the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General’s Office has offered a free and voluntary complaint resolution program for Maine consumers, staffed by trained volunteers and overseen by full-time staff.

Volunteers will mediate consumer complaints over the phone or by mail in the Attorney General’s Augusta Office on a variety of matters including express and implied warranty issues, landlord-tenant, car repairs and car sales, and more. Volunteers will be thoroughly trained in consumer law and mediation techniques at the three-day training. They will then volunteer between 4 to 6 hours per week on a schedule convenient to them during normal business hours under the supervision of members of the Attorney...


November 22, 2017
Attorney General Janet Mills decries FCC repeal of net neutrality rules
AUGUSTA – Attorney General Janet Mills decries the proposal of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to repeal the “net neutrality” rules put in place by the Obama administration that maintain important consumer protections for Internet service customers and an open Internet.

The proposal of the FCC will allow Internet Services Providers to slow or block access to certain sites or mobile applications, upending the idea of “net neutrality” that has allowed ideas and commerce to flourish across the web.
“This proposal is terrible for consumers. Individuals and businesses use the Internet every day to do our banking, to pay our bills, to do our schoolwork, and to do our jobs,” said Attorney General Mills. “This proposal will allow service providers to limit and slow down access to information based on their values and economic interests. The idea that we should all be able to access the same parts of the web and...


MARYLAND

November 29, 2017

Consumer Alert: Marylanders Purchasing Individual Health Insurance on Maryland Health Connection Urged to Seek Advice to Maximize Cost-Savings

Baltimore, MD (November 29, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today advised Maryland consumers to shop around this year and not just allow their plans to auto-renew, and to seek expert advice or assistance in making their decisions about health insurance. Enrollment for individual health plan coverage for calendar year 2018 is currently open, and the deadline to sign up for 2018 coverage is December 15.

“Rising costs and the Trump administration’s decision to stop making cost-sharing reduction payments have significantly changed health plan pricing in Maryland,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Consumers, particularly those who receive little or no financial assistance, are strongly encouraged to seek individualized advice from a navigator or broker to find the best plan at the best price.”

Because of complicated pricing changes arising out of the Trump administration’s failure to continue making cost-sharing reduction payments, it is possible that some consumers may find that buying...


November 20, 2017

Attorney General Frosh: ‘Tis the Season to Know Your Consumer Rights, Be Vigilant This Holiday Season

Baltimore, MD (November 20, 2017) – As Black Friday, the unofficial start to the holiday shopping season, quickly approaches, Attorney General Frosh is urging consumers to know their rights, educate themselves, and to be extra vigilant as consumer spending online and in stores sharply increases. November also marks the start of a sharp increase in charitable giving. Consumers spend approximately $60 billion on holiday shopping, especially during the Thanksgiving weekend alone.

“Having the basic knowledge of your consumer rights can make an enormous difference in the way you shop and donate, whether it’s online, or in a brick and mortar store,” said Attorney General Frosh. “The number one rule: if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.”
In an effort to help consumers avoid falling victim to holiday season traps, Attorney General Frosh issued the following tips for consumers:
Make sure your charitable donations are going to the intended cause. Particularly...


November 16, 2017

Report: Health Education Advocacy Unit Saves $3.7 Million for Patients, Maryland Consumers

BALTIMORE, MD (November 16, 2017)—Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that the Health Education Advocacy Unit, within the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General, closed 2,487 cases in Fiscal Year 2017, assisting patients in saving or recovering nearly $3.7 million. The information was included as a part of the comprehensive Annual Report on the Health Insurance Carrier Appeals and Grievances Process that must be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly each year.

The Health Education Advocacy Unit (HEAU) offers mediation services to consumers who have billing or other business-related disputes with their healthcare providers or coverage disputes with their health benefit plans. The Unit also helps consumers who have been denied enrollment in a Qualified Health Plan or denied Advanced Premium Tax Credits or Cost-Sharing Reductions by Maryland Health Connection, Maryland’s health insurance marketplace.

In Fiscal Year 2017, Maryland-regulated carriers – health insurance issuers, nonprofit...


MASSACHUSETTS

November 30, 2017

AG Healey Statement on Ruling in the Eversource Rate Case

Boston — Attorney General Maura Healey today released the following statement in response to an order from the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) increasing the electric rates for Eversource’s 1.4 million customers by $37 million in the first year and allowing for additional annual rate increases of over 3.5 percent per year over the following four years for a total increase of over $220 million over a five-year period.

Under the DPU’s order, the total amount that customers pay to have their electricity delivered by NSTAR Electric Company (NSTAR) and Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECo) will increase in the first year by $12 million and $25 million, respectively.

“At a time when businesses and residents are already struggling with high energy costs, the DPU’s order chooses unjustified corporate profits over Eversource’s 1.4 million customers. The Department has allowed Eversource to raise rates by hundreds of millions of dollars, instead of imposing the...

November 28, 2017

**AG Healey Issues Bulletin on Charitable Donations Ahead of Holiday Giving Season**

Boston — Only 47 percent of the funds conventional professional solicitors raised on behalf of charities were transferred to charitable organizations in 2016, according to a bulletin released on “Giving Tuesday” by Attorney General Maura Healey. The bulletin also offers tips for consumers who are looking to make donations to charitable organizations this holiday giving season.

“Massachusetts is home to many of the strongest and most innovative charities in the country, and generous charitable giving is a deeply rooted value in our state,” said AG Healey. “With so many deserving charities, it’s important that consumers are able to make informed decisions and give wisely to nonprofit organizations that work hard to help people and communities across the state.”

Charitable organizations sometimes pay professional solicitors to solicit donations from the public, and solicitors are required by statute to register with the AG’s Office. Conventional professional solicitors fundraise through phone, mail and door-to-door campaigns.


November 02, 2017

**AG’s Office, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Issue Report Addressing Student Loan Debt Crisis**

Boston — Today, the Student Debt Working Group launched last year by Attorney General Maura Healey and Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce CEO Jim Rooney issued a report highlighting the group’s accomplishments, recommendations, and initiatives underway to help student borrowers and address the student loan debt crisis.

Over the past year, the Student Debt Working Group – which has brought together leaders from the business community, non-profits, and government to exchange ideas for improving access to higher education – have come together to discuss strategies to reduce unaffordable debt, increase transparency in student lending, and learn about programs at colleges and universities to create more affordable paths to graduation and into the workforce and help employees manage and repay their loans.

“Addressing the student debt crisis in our country is going to take everyone rolling up their sleeves,” AG Healey said. “Our Working Group brought together leaders from the business community, colleges...”

Schuette Encourages Michigan Residents to Give Wisely During the Holiday Season


“Today is Giving Tuesday and I know that Michigan residents are opening their hearts and their wallets to donate to charitable organizations,” said Schuette. “The generosity of Michigan residents is why we publish Giving Wisely each year. It is a way to remind Michigan residents to think before they give. This gives donors peace of mind and ensures that their donations reach worthwhile organizations.”

Over the holidays, charitable giving increases and many charities begin their end of the year fundraising appeals. The free Giving Wisely handout provides timely and critical advice to anyone considering a donation. The resource informs Michigan citizens on protecting personal and financial information...


AG Hood Urges Shopper Safety Ahead of Black Friday, Cyber Monday

The busiest shopping days of the year are just a few days away, and Attorney General Jim Hood is reminding shoppers of ways to protect themselves both personally and financially this holiday season.

“In the past, shoppers only had to worry about someone snatching their wallets to get their cash and credit or debit cards. Now, our account information can be stolen from us even when we are shopping online in the safety of our homes,” said General Hood. “Our credit and debit card payment information can be stolen by an invisible thief who may have hacked into the retailer’s payment system or even our own computer systems. During the holiday season, consumers should exercise extreme caution whether they are shopping at stores or online.”

The following are safety measures from the AG’s Consumer Protection Division:
• Be self-aware. Always park in well-lit areas and try to place purchases in the trunk so valuable...

MISSOURI

November 22, 2017

AG Hawley Offers Tips to Avoid Holiday Scams

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley offers the following tips for Missouri consumers to protect themselves during the holiday season.

“We want to ensure that consumers get their deals as promised,” Hawley said. “Consumers need to do their research, be well prepared, and avoid being taken advantage of by scammers who prey upon people during this time of year.”

Attorney General Hawley offers the following tips:

Bring paper or electronic copies of special advertising. By bringing a copy of the special holiday deal to the store with you, it will be easier for you to verify that you are getting the price that the store advertised.

Research merchants before you shop. Find out how long a company has been in business and look into its customer service track record before making a substantial purchase.

Make sure you understand return and exchange policies. Shoppers should read the fine print...


NEW MEXICO

November 28, 2017


Albuquerque, NM – As a component of his consumer protection initiatives, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas released a draft of a powerful tool aimed at helping New Mexico consumers better understand and purchasing solar power systems for their homes: Distributed Generation Disclosure Statement.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, a bill was passed to ensure homeowners who sought to put solar on their roof-tops would have all the information they would need to make an informed financial decision. That bill requires the Attorney General to publish a form on which merchants will disclose the information required by the statute. Due to the importance of solar energy in New Mexico’s economy, Attorney General Balderas is seeking comments on the proposed draft form before a final version is published at the end of the year.

The minimal disclosures contained in the Distributed Generation Disclosure Statement will help consumers across the state to understand...

November 27, 2017

**GIVING TUESDAY ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans to Avoid Charity Scams**

Santa Fe, NM - Ahead of Giving Tuesday, Attorney General Balderas issued a Scam Alert today to help New Mexicans avoid becoming the victim of charity scams.

“If you plan to make donations tomorrow for Giving Tuesday, make sure your money is going where it is intended,” Attorney General Balderas said. “New Mexicans are extremely generous and caring, but sadly there are countless scammers ready to take advantage of you on Giving Tuesday. Be diligent and contact our office if you have questions about a charity before you give.”

**Donation Tips**

Check Registration Status: Charities operating in New Mexico and telemarketers soliciting donations in New Mexico are required to register with the Attorney General’s Registry of Charitable Organizations. They are also required to file annual financial reports. Confirm that the charity is registered and up-to-date with its financial reporting by searching the Attorney General’s Registry of Charitable Organizations at https://secure.nmag.gov/CharitySearch/.

Send...


November 22, 2017

**BLACK FRIDAY & CYBER MONDAY SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexico Shoppers**

Albuquerque, NM – On the eve of Thanksgiving, and with Black Friday starting earlier and earlier, Attorney General Hector Balderas warns New Mexicans to protect themselves against scammers as they hit the Animas Valley Mall in Farmington, Albuquerque Uptown, plazas in Mesilla and Santa Fe, and shops across the state. Attorney General Balderas issued a Scam Alert regarding scams and deceptive advertising while shopping at stores or online sites this Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

“New Mexicans are the most generous and loving people, but I want them to be on guard as they shop for deals on Black Friday and Cyber Monday for their family and friends,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “Scammer and thieves love the holidays as they seek to prey on New Mexicans’ goodwill, but I am urging our citizens to be vigilant as they search for those perfect gifts.”

Attorney General Balderas warned New Mexico consumers to be...


November 16, 2017

**CONSUMER ADVISORY: AG Balderas Issues Gift Card Advisory**

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued tips for both givers and...
receivers of gift cards this holiday season, noting that the use and abuse of gift cards has continued to increase with the increase of online shopping.

“Scammers are out to steal from you, especially during the holiday shopping season. They are ready to prey on your love and generosity for family and friends, so be diligent and protect your money from these thieves,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “Purchasing gift cards as holiday gifts has become increasingly popular, but there are reasons for both the gift-giver and the gift-card-receiver to take care in the transaction.”

Giving gift cards that retain their value:

• Buy only from sources you know and trust. Avoid buying gift cards from online auction sites, because the cards may be counterfeit or may have been obtained fraudulently.
• Read the fine print before you buy. Is…

Original Press Release:

November 13, 2017
SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans about Common Online Holiday Shopping Scams
Santa Fe NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert to encourage online holiday shoppers to avoid common scams. The Attorney General is issuing tips for avoiding online scams during this hectic time of year to help New Mexico shoppers stay alert and protect their finances.

“The holiday shopping season is one of the most dangerous times for consumers to fall victim to scams,” Attorney General Balderas said. “Many people ramp up their spending this time of year and making sure that gifts arrive on time can put pressure on shoppers to leap into expenses before looking into whether businesses and their products are legitimate.”

Common Online Scams and How to Avoid Them:
The Attorney General has listed some of the most common online scams and ways to avoid falling prey to them. Don’t give out your credit card or other financial information for a chance at…

Original Press Release:

NEW YORK
November 28, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Report Finds Professional Fundraisers Overall Retain More Than One-Third Of Charitable Campaign Donations; Some Retain More Than Half
NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today released his annual “Pennies for
Charity: Where Your Money Goes; Fundraising by Professional Fundraisers” report, which found that more than one-third of charitable donations ended up in the pockets of the professional fundraisers. This year’s report looks at trends in fundraising as well as the percentage of funds raised that went to charities. The report found that online methods are rising, while traditional methods like direct mail are gradually declining.

New York has a robust charitable sector, supported by generous giving by New Yorkers. In 2016, more than $1.2 billion was raised in New York State through 987 fundraising campaigns conducted by professional fundraisers on behalf of charities that used a range of methods including special events, direct mail and telemarketing. These campaigns are the focus of this report. The report and the searchable Pennies for Charity database containing the data underlying...


November 28, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Issues Charitable Giving Tips For Giving Tuesday
NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman issued charitable giving tips today for “Giving Tuesday,” which encourages charitable donations as families focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

“Giving Tuesday is a wonderful opportunity for New Yorkers to give back to those in need here in New York and around the globe,” Attorney General Schneiderman said. “If you plan on giving, follow our tips to ensure that your generous donations are going to reputable organizations.”

The Attorney General’s guidance includes:
Take Time To Research The Organization. Make sure you are familiar with the organization, its mission, and its effectiveness before giving. Always ask for information in writing – and be wary if an organization will not provide information about charitable programs and finances upon request. Any legitimate organization will be happy to send you information.
Consult charitiesnys.com to ensure that it is registered, and to learn more about its mission and...


November 27, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Issues Charitable Giving Tips For Giving Tuesday
NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman issued charitable giving tips in advance of tomorrow’s “Giving Tuesday,” which encourages charitable donations as families focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

“Giving Tuesday is a wonderful opportunity for New Yorkers to give back to those in need here in New York and around the globe,” Attorney General Schneiderman said. “If you plan on giving,
follow our tips to ensure that your generous donations are going to reputable organizations.”

The Attorney General’s guidance includes:

Take Time To Research The Organization. Make sure you are familiar with the organization, its mission, and its effectiveness before giving. Always ask for information in writing – and be wary if an organization will not provide information about charitable programs and finances upon request. Any legitimate organization will be happy to send you information.

Consult charitiesnys.com to ensure that it is registered, and to learn more about its...


November 22, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Issues Consumer Alert For Black Friday And Cyber Monday

As New Yorkers prepare for the holiday shopping season, Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman issued tips for consumers to protect themselves on Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

“As New Yorkers begin making holiday purchases for family and friends, they should know that some deals are too good to be true,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “We encourage consumers to follow our tips to protect against fraudsters and ensure they spend their money wisely and safely this holiday season.”

Attorney General Schneiderman issued the following tips for consumers shopping on Black Friday and Cyber Monday:

Beware of misleading bargains and added fees. The “sale” price may have been marked up before it was marked down – nullifying the impact of the sale. Often, the touted “sale” price may, in fact, be significantly higher than the price for that same item later in the season. Additionally, delivery charges and/or other added costs such as...


November 21, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Additional $20 Million In Funding For Homeowner Protection Program

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced an additional $20 million in funding for the fifth year of his Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP), which connects homeowners to free, qualified mortgage-assistance relief services across New York.

This new $20 million in funding brings Attorney General Schneiderman's total investment in HOPP to $130 million since 2012.

“No New Yorker should lose their home because they don’t have access to an attorney. As communities across New York continue to recover from the housing crisis, HOPP has provided a lifeline that allows families to avoid foreclosure and remain in their homes – and it’s clear that there’s an ongoing need for these critical services,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “I’m
proud that we’re able to provide an additional $20 million for this vital program.”
Since the Office of the Attorney General established the program in 2012, more than 80,000 families have received free, high-quality assistance to avoid foreclosure...


November 21, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Releases Open Letter To FCC: Net Neutrality Public Comment Process Corrupted By "Massive Scheme"
NEW YORK - As FCC Chairman Pai announced his plan to dismantle the net neutrality regulations that ensure a free and open internet, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman released an open letter regarding the massive scheme to corrupt the FCC’s notice and comment process through the misuse of enormous numbers of real New Yorkers’ and other Americans’ identities. That scheme is under investigation by the Attorney General’s office; however, to date, the FCC has refused to provide the office with information that is critical to the investigation.
In May 2017, researchers and reporters discovered that the FCC’s public comment process was being corrupted by the submission of enormous numbers of fake comments concerning the possible repeal of net neutrality rules. The Attorney General’s office analyzed the fake comments and found that tens of thousands of New Yorkers – and hundreds of thousands of Americans – may have had their identities misused. While...


November 02, 2017
A.G. Schneiderman Announces SHIELD Act To Protect New Yorkers From Data Breaches
Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman introduced new legislation today to comprehensively protect New Yorkers’ personal information from a growing number of data breaches. In the wake of the Equifax breach, the Stop Hacks and Improve Electronic Data Security Act (SHIELD Act) - introduced in the legislature this week - would close major gaps in New York’s data security laws, without putting an undue burden on businesses.
“It’s clear that New York’s data security laws are weak and outdated. The SHIELD Act would help ensure these hacks never happen in the first place. It’s time for Albany to act, so that no more New Yorkers are needlessly victimized by weak data security measures and criminal hackers who are constantly on the prowl,” said Attorney General Schneiderman.
The SHIELD Act was introduced this week by Attorney General Schneiderman as a program bill and is sponsored by Senator David Carlucci and Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh. In 2016...


69
November 22, 2017

Ahead of Black Friday, Attorney General DeWine Offers Consumer Protection Tips
(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today offered consumer protection tips ahead of Thanksgiving weekend, one of the busiest shopping weekends of the year.

Last year, the Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section received over 3,700 complaints in November and December. This year, the National Retail Federation expects holiday retail sales to increase as much as four percent, and it says an estimated 69 percent of Americans plan to shop over Thanksgiving weekend.

“It’s a busy time of year, and we want to help consumers avoid problems,” Attorney General DeWine said. “Prevention and awareness are critical.”

This holiday shopping season, consumers should keep in mind:

Sellers can set their own return policies. Under Ohio’s consumer protection laws, sellers can choose to set their own return policies, including policies of “no returns,” but they must clearly tell you what the policy is before you complete the purchase. ...
Initiative to help Ohio businesses with cybersecurity issues.
“The Data Protection Act is an effort to encourage businesses to take the necessary steps to protect their customer data and avoid costly data breaches,” said Attorney General DeWine. “As businesses beef up their cybersecurity, consumers will benefit from the additional protection as well.”
“As the world is increasingly interconnected, we have a responsibility to secure cyberspace,” Sen. Hackett said. “S.B. 220 will provide businesses and consumers with quality protections.”
The Data Protection Act would change Ohio laws so that businesses that take reasonable precautions and meet industry-recommended standards would be afforded a “safe harbor” against legal claims should a data breach occur. To trigger the...

OKLAHOMA
November 28, 2017
Attorney General Hunter Offers Tips for Oklahomans to Avoid Online Holiday Shopping Scams
OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Mike Hunter is urging Oklahomans to use caution when making online purchases this holiday season to avoid scams and fraud.
According to Adobe Digital Insights, a company that publishes research on digital marketing to marketers and business leaders, reported online sales during the 2016 holiday season hit a record $91.7 billion in sales, up from $82.5 billion in 2015. Researchers anticipate even more online sales in 2017.
The FBI’s 2016 Internet Crime Report stated recently, loss from cybercrime exceeded $1.3 billion in the United States last year. The report noted 2,455 Oklahomans made complaints to the FBI and lost more than $15.4 million. Read the FBI’s report, here: http://bit.ly/2tP1alf.
Attorney General Hunter said rapid advancement in technology brings sophisticated scams that could target unsuspecting Oklahomans who are trying to get their shopping done online.
“Data breaches in 2016 increased by 40 percent from the previous year, hitting an all-time...

PENNSYLVANIA
November 22, 2017
Beware of Holiday Shopping Scams
HARRISBURG — As the holiday season arrives, Attorney General Josh Shapiro is warning Pennsylvanians to beware of scams and deceptive advertising while shopping at stores or
online this year.

“Thanksgiving reminds us how much we have to be thankful for, but the holiday season also brings deceptive advertising and online scams,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “These kinds of scams get more sophisticated every year. Be vigilant and follow these tips from the Office of Attorney General to protect yourself from Grinches looking to steal your hard-earned money.”

Attorney General Shapiro warned Pennsylvania consumers to be on the lookout for:

- The Bait and Switch: Take retailers’ advertisements to the store with you. Unscrupulous retailers may advertise goods at low prices, but when you get to the store the price may be higher than advertised or the product might not be there at all.
- Skimming Devices: During the holidays last year, police were called to...

November 16, 2017

Attorney General Shapiro and Senator Casey Commend FCC for Heeding Call to Let Phone Companies Block Illegal Robocalls

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) today applauded the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) decision to finalize new rules to protect Americans from illegal robocalls. The new rules allow phone companies to block certain phone numbers that do not or cannot make outgoing calls.

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), there are nearly 2.4 billion robocalls made every month. Illegal robocall schemes victimize countless individuals, including seniors, robbing them of their savings. It is estimated that con artists steal approximately $3 billion from seniors via scams — including fraudulent phone calls enabled by illegal robocall technology.

“The FCC’s action today, allowing phone companies to block spoofing, is a clear victory for consumers,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. “Pennsylvanians – especially seniors – have been targeted by these fraudulent robocalls for far too long, and that’s why I joined with Senator Casey last month, and 28 attorneys general...

November 20, 2017

Attorney General Kilmartin to File Legislation Banning Fees for Consumer Security Freezes

With the recent data breach at Equifax and the increased need for consumers to have greater...
control in protecting their identity from hackers, Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin today announced his intention to file legislation that would prohibit credit bureaus from charging all Rhode Island consumers fees to place, temporarily lift, or remove security freezes on their accounts.

Under current law (RIGL 6-48), A consumer may be charged a fee of no more than ten dollars ($10.00) for any security freeze services, including, but not limited to, the placement, temporary lifting, and permanent removal of a security freeze.

The consumer may not be charged for a one-time reissue of a new personal identification number; provided, however, the consumer may be charged not more than five dollars ($5.00) for subsequent instances of loss of the personal identification number.

However, a consumer reporting agency may not charge any fee to a victim of identity theft...


November 15, 2017
AG Kilmartin Applauds Fidelity’s Security Measures to Better Protect Client Information
Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin today applauded Fidelity’s announcement on the steps the company has taken to better protect client personal and account information when sharing with third-party websites.

"In light of the massive data breach at Equifax, among other high-profile breaches, it is good to see companies like Fidelity take protecting client and consumer information more seriously and invest in solutions that the client can count on. This innovative and secure system created by Fidelity gives consumers more control over who has access to their information, giving them confidence that their information and identity are safe," said Attorney General Kilmartin.


SOUTH DAKOTA

November 28, 2017
Attorney General Jackley Provides Charitable Giving Tips for the Holiday Season
PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakotans are extremely generous, whether the giving comes in the wake of a national disaster or during the gift giving season, which is upon us.

“I encourage South Dakotans to continue to give to those less fortunate, but to follow these precautions to ensure their donation is going to the cause it is intended,” said Attorney General Marty Jackley.

Here are a few tips to avoid becoming a victim:
• Verify the legitimacy of the nonprofit organization as well as its nonprofit status. Visit such sites as www.charitynavigator.org or www.guidestar.org.
• Ask specifically how this donation will be used.

• Ask how much of your donation will go to the charity and how much will be used to pay fund raising costs.
• Beware of charitable organizations that use sound alike names of reputable organizations.
• Donors should not respond to any unsolicited emails, but rather go directly to recognized charities or aid...


November 20, 2017
Attorney General Jackley Provides Holiday Shopping Tips
PIERRE, S.D. – The holiday shopping season is upon us and the lure of Black Friday deals and advertisements are abundant. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division is again encouraging consumers to shop with care this holiday season.

Tips on Holiday Shopping:
• Check the refund and return policies for restrictions and exceptions
• When buying gift cards, check for fees and expiration dates that apply
• Read the fine print
• Double check delivery dates
• Keep your receipts to make returns and exchanges easier
• Review warranties
• Compare prices
• Check shipping and handling fees
Along with those traditional shopping methods consumers also need to proceed with caution when dealing with online retailers. ...


November 02, 2017
Attorney General Jackley Warns South Dakota Consumers of Utility Scam Targeting the State
PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley is warning South Dakota consumers to avoid a scam involving callers posing as utility company employees who attempt to obtain credit card or bank account information over the phone.

“Scammers are calling and claiming to be employees of legitimate power companies and threaten to shut off consumers’ power if they do not provide a credit card number or bank account number immediately,” said Jackley. “These callers are also using caller ID spoofing, where the call appears to be coming from legitimate utility providers. Hang up and call your utility company to confirm your account status.”

These callers are threatening immediate action if the alleged delinquent account is not satisfied. The cold weather and the threat of power being turned off, often triggers consumer to react quickly. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division confirms they have received many complaints from consumers in western South Dakota, but...

AG Paxton Praises Actions by President Trump and Congress to Rescind the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Unconstitutional Arbitration Rule

Attorney General Paxton praised President Trump for signing into law a joint resolution passed by the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives that rescinds the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB) unconstitutional Arbitration Rule, which would have increased the cost of credit for Americans and deprived them of a resource for resolving disputes between banks and consumers.

Leading a 12-state coalition, Attorney General Paxton recently filed a friend-of-the-court brief in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas challenging the constitutionality of both the CFPB and its Arbitration Rule. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, along with several Texas-based business organizations, sued the CFPB in September to block the rule from taking effect. That lawsuit has now been voluntarily dismissed in light of the president’s decision to rescind the Arbitration Rule.

“We’re fortunate to have a president and a Congress who are faithful to the Constitution. They recognize that the CFPB...
WASHINGTON

November 27, 2017

Scam Alert: Flood-damaged cars could be for sale in Washington

OLYMPIA — While many areas of the country are still reeling from the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Harvey, scam artists are now trying to sell flood-damaged vehicles here in Washington state. The Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance estimates as many as 1 million vehicles flood-damaged vehicles could be sold to unsuspecting buyers nationwide.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson and the Washington State Auto Dealers Association urge consumers not to be fooled by the perfect exterior condition of the car and the new car smell.

A flood-damaged car may look normal, but almost always will have serious problems including mildew and corroded wires which can result in an electrical failure.

“I am committed to protecting consumers from scams,” Ferguson said. “The more informed people are, the less likely they are to become a victim.”

Before you buy a used car, research the title and VIN number at www.vehiclehistory.gov and/or www.carfax.com/flood.

Carefully inspect the...

WEST VIRGINIA

November 26, 2017

Attorney General Morrisey Offers Tips For Safe Cyber Monday Shopping

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey urges consumers to exercise caution as Cyber Monday continues the start of the holiday shopping season.

“This is the time when holiday shopping kicks into full gear,” Attorney General Morrisey said.

“It’s important to know how to spot scams and unscrupulous situations as you find the perfect gift for that special somebody.”

The Attorney General recommends that consumers pay close attention to holiday credit card offers, limit their use of debit cards and be aware of fraudulent websites or coupons that resemble the real thing.

In-store shoppers also should leave Social Security cards and other non-essential information at home, lock presents away in the trunk, watch for skimming devices and use a RFID blocking
November 24, 2017
**Attorney General Morrisey Offers Tips For Safe Black Friday Shopping**

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey urges consumers to exercise caution as Black Friday and Cyber Monday start the holiday shopping season.

“This is the time when holiday shopping kicks into full gear,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “It’s important to know how to spot scams and unscrupulous situations as you find the perfect gift for that special somebody.”

The Attorney General recommends that consumers pay close attention to holiday credit card offers, limit their use of debit cards and be aware of fraudulent websites or coupons that resemble the real thing.

In-store shoppers also should leave Social Security cards and other non-essential information at home, lock presents away in the trunk, watch for skimming devices and use a RFID blocking sleeve or wallet to protect credit/debit cards from electronic pickpockets.

Holiday credit card offers require a close reading of the contract. Deferred interest promotions may promise zero-percent interest through December...


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November 22, 2017
**Attorney General Morrisey Offers Tips For Safe Holiday Shopping**

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey urges consumers to exercise caution as Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday start the holiday shopping season.

“This is the time when holiday shopping kicks into full gear,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “It’s important to know how to spot scams and unscrupulous situations as you find the perfect gift for that special somebody.”

The Attorney General recommends that consumers pay close attention to holiday credit card offers, limit their use of debit cards and be aware of fraudulent websites or coupons that resemble the real thing.

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Holiday credit card offers require a close reading of the contract. Deferred interest promotions
November 09, 2017

**Attorney General Morrisey Urges Veterans, Service Members to Watch for Phishing Scams**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey urges veterans and all enlisted military members to be wary of phishing scams.

Scammers have been known to target veterans and members of the military. These con artists will look for any opportunity to steal personal information and use it to their advantage.

The matter is of particular concern in West Virginia, which is home to more than 150,000 veterans and enlisted service members – ranking as one of the highest per capita military service rates in the nation.

“This is a special time to celebrate those who have made the ultimate sacrifice by putting their lives on the line to secure the freedom we all enjoy,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “It’s also an important opportunity for every veteran and military member to recognize the risks of identity theft and protect themselves so they do not get caught up in a scam...

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**Wisconsin**

November 02, 2017

**AG Schimel and Google Host Internet Safety Event for Youth**

WAUSAU, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel and representatives from Google traveled to John Muir Middle School in Wausau to participate in the Online Safety Roadshow: How to Be Internet Awesome, which is a presentation developed by Google to educate middle school students about online safety.

“The internet provides countless benefits to society and has changed the way we learn and do business, yet it provides many opportunities for bad actors to target our children and access their personal information,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “I appreciate Google’s efforts to educate Wisconsin youth and give them the tools and resources to be safe online.”

Attorney General Schimel kicked off the presentation by highlighting the importance of online safety to students and also competed in the password faceoff challenge, where students compete to come up with the strongest password possible. Google’s internet safety instructors covered topics such as sharing with...

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