THE STATE CENTER
CONSUMER
PROTECTION REPORT

May 2018
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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Consumer Protection Cases

ARIZONA

May 29, 2018

**Former Investment Advisor Indicted Accused of Stealing Client’s Retirement Accounts**

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced a State Grand Jury indicted Howard M. Price III, a former investment adviser, for allegedly stealing $475,000 from his client’s retirement accounts. Price, 44, is charged with one count of Fraudulent Schemes & Artifices and three counts of Theft.

The Arizona Corporation Commission investigated this case. Price has not been registered to sell securities or licensed to provide investment advice in Arizona since 2012. From 2013 to 2017, Price allegedly convinced three clients to roll over their IRA retirement money to his firm, Howard Price Wealth Management, with the promise of guaranteed returns. The State alleges that once Price gained control of the victims' money, he misused his clients' retirement funds to make purchases at clubs, bars, and restaurants in Scottsdale and Arcadia.

Assistant Attorney General Adam J Schwartz is prosecuting this case.

All defendants are presumed innocent unless convicted in a court of law. ...


May 14, 2018

**$340,000 Fine Against Desert Valley Aire for Illegal Telemarketing Calls**

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced Desert Valley Aire Inc. will pay $340,000 in civil fines for repeatedly calling Arizonans on the “Do Not Call” Registry. In a consent judgment reached with the Attorney General’s Office, Desert Valley Aire admitted to making at least 25,000 illegal telemarketing calls from 2011 to 2015. The company is also banned from making telemarketing calls for 5 years.

"I have zero tolerance for illegal telemarketing calls which are incredibly annoying and frustrating," said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. "My office will continue to aggressively enforce Arizona’s telemarketing laws."

In May 2018, the Attorney General’s Office filed a consumer fraud lawsuit against Desert Valley Aire, an HVAC installation and maintenance company in Phoenix, Prescott, and Southern Arizona. According to the settlement, Desert Valley Aire admitted to continuing to call Arizona consumers who told the company to stop calling. Some consumers alleged that when they confronted Desert...

May 10, 2018

AG Brnovich Obtains Full Restitution for Victims of Annual Minutes Scam

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich obtained a consent judgment against Compliance Filings Service for allegedly sending government look-alike “Annual Minutes” mailers to Arizona businesses. The consent judgment requires Compliance Filings Service to pay $88,650 in restitution. All of the 850 Arizona businesses that mailed a check to Compliance Filings Service will have the opportunity to receive a full refund.

“Every business that was tricked into paying $150 can get their money back,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “This is the second time in less than a year that we’ve obtained a full refund for victims of phony government look-alike notices. This judgment sends a strong message that scam mailers will not be tolerated in Arizona.”

Compliance Filings Service allegedly sent over 129,000 deceptive solicitations to Arizona businesses between 2016 and 2017. These solicitations prominently featured the words “Annual Minutes Compliance Notice” in large letters at the top of the page and...


May 08, 2018

Fake Contractor Sentenced to 6.5 Years in Prison

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced Edward Carrillo, Jr. was sentenced to 6.5 years in prison for stealing thousands of dollars in a roofing and pool repair scam in Scottsdale. Carrillo was also ordered to pay restitution to the homeowner.

In May 2016, the Arizona Registrar of Contractors and Special Agents with the Attorney General’s Office launched an investigation after a homeowner paid Carrillo approximately $15,000 for roofing and pool repairs that were never completed. Carrillo falsely claimed to own a roofing company. He also fraudulently used the ROC license number of a legitimate local construction firm with which he had no affiliation.

In November 2016, Carrillo was charged with seven felony counts including Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices, Taking the Identity of Another, Money Laundering, Forgery, and Criminal Impersonation. In April 2018, Carrillo pleaded guilty to one count of Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices. ...


May 03, 2018

AG Brnovich Files Consumer Fraud Lawsuit Against "DIY Neurocare"

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced the filing of a consumer fraud lawsuit against Arizona-based DIY Neurocare of America, LLC and its CEO Lyle Day. The lawsuit alleges DIY Neurocare refused to issue refunds to elderly consumers for LED light systems that supposedly treated symptoms of peripheral neuropathy and other ailments.
According to the consumer fraud lawsuit, DIY Neurocare sold the LED light systems for about $4,000 each, touting a “No Risk 100% Money Back Guarantee.” The State alleges that DIY Neurocare deceptively advertised that consumers who tried the product for 12 months, followed the DIY Neurocare protocol, and did not see improvements with their symptoms could receive a complete refund of the purchase price. However, DIY Neurocare allegedly failed to issue the promised refunds to numerous consumers, in violation of the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act. Further, the lawsuit alleges that DIY Neurocare failed to give consumers notice of their...


May 02, 2018
AG Brnovich Secures $40 Million Volkswagen Consumer Fraud Settlement
PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced today a $40 million settlement with Volkswagen to resolve false advertising claims involving so-called “Clean Diesel” cars and Volkswagen’s well-publicized diesel engine scandal. Under the settlement, VW agrees to pay Arizona consumers up to $1,000 for every qualifying vehicle. Arizona is the first state to obtain a direct consumer restitution payment as a result of a state enforcement action.

“The Attorney General’s Office isn’t afraid to take on a fight when Arizona consumers are deceived, which is why we filed our own consumer fraud lawsuit against VW,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “We believed Arizona consumers deserved more and now they’re getting more.”

In addition to this $10.5 million in direct consumer restitution for Arizonans, VW will also deposit $20 million into the state's general fund to be used towards the state’s education funding shortage. ...


ARKANSAS
May 16, 2018
Rutledge Reaches Settlement with Little Rock Candy Company
LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge and Treatsie LLC of Little Rock have reached a settlement to resolve allegations that Treatsie continued to sell and advertise subscriptions for their gourmet candy boxes, but failed to deliver hundreds of the boxes, but in some cases, delivered the orders months late. The company also failed to refund subscription costs to customers who did not receive the goods they ordered.

“Treatsie customers will now be made whole with this settlement,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The deceptive business practices of Treatsie and its owners brought financial losses
to consumers. I am pleased the company is being held responsible for their bad business practices.”

The consent judgment, which was filed in Pulaski County Circuit Court, includes $154,644.70 in restitution to consumers, including $4,076.12 for 145 Arkansans. Treatsie will also pay $60,000 in civil penalties, with $50,000 in civil penalties suspended.

Rutledge filed a consumer-protection lawsuit against...


CALIFORNIA

May 24, 2018

Attorney General Becerra: Cox Communications to Pay $3.3 Million for Violations of California’s Hazardous Waste Laws

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced a $3,318,700 settlement with Cox Communications California, LLC (Cox) and other related entities to resolve allegations that its California facilities unlawfully disposed of hazardous waste — including hazardous batteries, electronic devices, and aerosols. These acts constitute violations of California’s Hazardous Waste Control Law, and of California’s Unfair Competition Law, as such conduct gives Cox a competitive advantage over other regulated entities that are complying with the law. Cox also is alleged to have discarded customer records without rendering personal information unreadable. This settlement was the result of a partnership between the Attorney General’s Office and the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office.

“If a company wants to do business in our state, it must abide by our laws,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Unlawfully disposing of hazardous waste can lead to serious health and environmental risks. Unlawfully disposing of personal customer information can seriously...


May 16, 2018

Attorney General Becerra Announces Criminal Charges Against Four Individuals Behind Cyber Exploitation Website

SACRAMENTO — California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced charges of extortion, money laundering, and identity theft against four defendants who are allegedly behind the exploitative website Mugshots.com. The website mines data from police and sheriffs’ department websites to collect individuals' names, booking photos and charges, then republishes the information online without the individuals' knowledge or consent. Once subjects request that their booking photos be removed, they are routed to a secondary website called Unpublisharrest.com and charged a "de-publishing" fee to have the content removed.
Mugshots.com does not remove criminal record information until a subject pays the fee. This is the case even if the subject had charges dismissed or had been arrested due to mistaken identity or law enforcement error. Those subjects who cannot pay the fee may subsequently be denied housing, employment, or other opportunities because their booking photo is readily available on the internet. ...


**COLORADO**

May 02, 2018

**Attorney General Coffman Cracks Down on Fraudulently-Filed Businesses**

DENVER – Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman today announced the filing of several suits against businesses that fraudulently filed their organizing documents with the Secretary of State. These purported businesses used unwitting Colorado consumers’ addresses to fraudulently incorporate in Colorado. Several businesses, many of which appear to have been incorporated by individuals residing outside of Colorado or the United States, have been using local consumers’ residential addresses as the businesses’ principal office location or as their registered agents’ address without the consumers’ knowledge or consent. The unsuspecting consumers had no idea this was happening until they began receiving mail for these companies. One consumer discovered that more than 200 companies used his address as their principal office location and registered agents’ address. Another fraudulently-incorporated business was found to have been infringing on the trademark of a legitimate business selling water heaters overseas. ...


**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

May 08, 2018

**Attorney General and People’s Counsel Reach Agreement with AltaGas to Provide Benefits to District Residents**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine and People’s Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye announced today that the District of Columbia, the D.C. Office of the People’s Counsel, AltaGas and WGL Holdings (which owns Washington Gas) have reached a settlement agreement. The agreement – which provides tens of millions of dollars of benefits to District ratepayers and residents – will clear the way for AltaGas, a Canadian energy company, to acquire WGL Holdings. The merger is subject to final approval by the District’s Public Service Commission (PSC).
“Along with the People’s Counsel, we have negotiated an agreement that provides real benefits to District residents and to our environment,” Attorney General Racine said. “We believe this transforms a merger deal that previously was not in the public interest, and I am proud to support it. I commend the leadership of AltaGas for taking the steps necessary to enhance the deal.”


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**FLORIDA**

May 04, 2018

**Attorney General Bondi Files Lawsuit Against Farm-to-Table Restaurants’ Deceptive Claims**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today filed a complaint against Icebox Cafe, L.C. and Icebox Cafe at MIA, LLC, Miami restaurants, for allegedly supplying non-locally sourced or sustainable products as claimed on restaurant menus. Icebox Cafe at MIA, a self-proclaimed farm-to-table eatery, allegedly misled customers by claiming the restaurant received state certification as a local provider and sold local products. However, national food distributor, SYSCO, provided much of the food sold.

“Many Floridians want to know where and how their food was grown, and we will not stand for any restaurant misrepresenting the origin of the produce they sell to deceive customers seeking locally-sourced, fresh food,” said Attorney General Bondi.

Farm-to-table is a growing movement for consumers looking for a more health-conscious lifestyle, willing to pay top dollar for the freshness and uniqueness these restaurants provide.

Attorney General Bondi’s Office along with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Department...


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**ILLINOIS**

May 01, 2018

**MADIGAN: MANAGER OF CHICAGO CAR DEALERSHIP CHARGED WITH RUNNING MASSIVE THEFT RING, POCKETING OVER $1.5 MILLION**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced that a former Chicago business man was charged with running a large-scale theft scam through his car dealership and defrauding area residents and lenders of more than $1.5 million.

Donald T. Barclay, 56, who now resides in Scottsdale, Arizona, was charged in Cook County Circuit Court with one count of identity theft over $100,000, a Class X felony; one count of theft by deception over $1 million, a Class X felony; one count of theft by unauthorized control over
$1 million, a Class X felony; three counts of theft over $500,000, non-probationable Class 1 felonies; one count of theft by deception over $100,000, a Class 1 felony; as well as two counts of wire fraud, a Class 3 felony.

Madigan launched an investigation into Barclay, the former sole manager of Integrity of Chicago LLC, in February 2017, after her Consumer Fraud Bureau received complaints against...

➢ Original Press Release:
  http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2018_05/20180501b.html

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INDIANA
May 04, 2018
Hamilton County case illustrates need for homeowner vigilance against ‘storm chasers’
A judgment entered last month in Hamilton County Circuit Court should serve as a reminder to all Hoosiers to “Double Check Before You Write a Check” when contracting for home repairs following severe weather.
“Storm chasers” are companies that appear in neighborhoods after severe weather events and sell their services to repair damaged homes and other property. These individuals will typically conduct door-to-door sales in storm-ravaged communities urging consumers to immediately sign contracts with their companies. As part of their pitch, they often promise to assist consumers in negotiations with insurance companies at little to no out-of-pocket cost to customers. Some companies may seek immediate down payments for future work. Hoosiers should be wary of such operations as storm chasers are often fly-by-night operations that may perform sub-quality work or even fail to perform the work at all after receiving a consumer’s money. ...

➢ Original Press Release: https://calendar.in.gov/site/oag/event/hamilton-county-case-illustrates-need-for-homeowner-vigilance-against-storm-chasers/

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KANSAS
May 31, 2018
AG Derek Schmidt: Florida company fined for violating No-Call Act
TOPEKA – (May 31, 2018) – A Florida company has been ordered to pay $10,000 in penalties and fees for violating the No-Call Act, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today. National Auto Protection Corp, West Palm Beach, Florida, agreed to a consent judgment ordering it to pay $10,000 in fees and civil penalties. The judgment was approved last week by Judge Franklin R. Theis in Shawnee County District Court. In addition, National Auto Protection Corp was enjoined from further violations of the Kansas No-Call Act and the Kansas Consumer Protection Act.
“We continue to vigorously pursue violations of the Kansas No-Call Act,” Schmidt said. “Kansans who have signed up for the Do-Not-Call list have an expectation that their privacy be respected. We will enforce the law against those telemarketers who violate it.”

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division began investigating National Auto Protection Corp in 2016 after receiving complaints from Kansas consumers...


May 24, 2018

AG Derek Schmidt: Manhattan man banned from operating limo service in Kansas

TOPEKA – (May 24, 2018) – A Manhattan man has been banned from operating a vehicle transportation service in Kansas and ordered to repay consumers after being found in violation of Kansas consumer protection laws, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said. Pete Knippenberg, who does business as Light It Up, LLC, and Light It Up Limousines, has been permanently enjoined from operating a vehicle transportation service within the State of Kansas. Knippenberg was also ordered to pay $665 restitution to three consumers, as well as pay a civil penalty and reimburse the attorney general’s office for the cost of its investigation. District Judge Jeff Elder entered the judgment Tuesday in Pottawatomie County District Court after Knippenberg failed to respond to a lawsuit filed by the attorney general’s office in March. Schmidt had accused Knippenberg of engaging in the sale of limousine and party bus transportation services, accepting payment from consumers, and then...


May 21, 2018

AG Derek Schmidt: Consumer Protection Division recovers record $61 million in 2017

TOPEKA – (May 21, 2018) – The attorney general’s Consumer Protection Division recovered a record $61 million for consumers and taxpayers last year, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt announced today. In its annual report filed today with the governor and legislature, Schmidt’s office reported nearly $61.9 million in savings and recoveries to Kansas consumers and the state treasury in calendar year 2017. During Schmidt’s administration, the division has recovered a total of more than $208 million, by far the most in state history. The 2017 recoveries surpassed the previous record year of 2013, when the division returned $49.6 million to consumers and taxpayers. “The men and women in our Consumer Protection Division work every day to help Kansans who have been scammed, ripped off or defrauded,” Schmidt said. “That is one of the top priorities for our office. Some of our most satisfying work is returning to Kansans their own money that...
May 14, 2018

**Missouri tree and lawn care company ordered to repay Kansas consumer**

TOPEKA – (May 14, 2018) – A Missouri tree and lawn care company has been ordered to repay $1,000 to a Kansas consumer after violating Kansas consumer protection laws, Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Five-Star Tree & Lawn, LLC, of Lexington, Mo., was ordered to refund the consumer, and comply with Kansas consumer protection laws in the future. District Judge Franklin Theis approved the consent judgment last week in Shawnee County District Court. In addition to the consumer restitution, the company was ordered to comply with all Kansas consumer protection laws in the future and to repay the attorney general’s office for the cost of the investigation.

Schmidt had accused the company of violating the Kansas Consumer Protection Act by engaging in door-to-door sales, where the company failed to furnish the consumer with receipts containing notice of their three-day right to cancel. The company was also accused of unlawfully cashing the consumer’s...


May 09, 2018

**AG Derek Schmidt: New Equifax filing details personal data stolen in 2017 breach**

TOPEKA – (May 9, 2018) – A recent filing by Equifax disclosed additional details relating to its massive 2017 data breach, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Last year, Equifax, one of the nation’s three major credit reporting bureaus, announced that its system was compromised between May and July of 2017 affecting 143 million Americans. Equifax has said that number includes about 1.1 million Kansans.

Equifax this week disclosed additional details of the breach in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, in response to Congressional requests for the company to provide more information about the breach. According to the filing, information about 146.6 million U.S. consumers was exposed in the breach. All of those individuals’ names and birthdates were exposed; 145.5 million people had their Social Security numbers exposed; and 99 million home addresses were exposed. ...


**MARYLAND**

May 24, 2018

**Delaware Life Insurance Company to Pay $244,000 to Settle Allegations of Delayed Payments Under Annuity Contracts**

Boston — Delaware Life Insurance Company has agreed to pay $244,000 to resolve allegations that it failed to provide payments and forms in a timely and accurate manner for certain
annuity contracts, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today. The AG’s Office filed an assurance of discontinuance in Suffolk Superior Court yesterday alleging that Delaware Life violated Massachusetts consumer protection law when its systems failed to properly administer annuity contracts, resulting in delayed payments and tax forms to policyholders and beneficiaries.

“People should be able to trust their insurance companies to provide accurate, on-time payments, forms, and other important documents,” AG Healey said. “Through this settlement, Delaware Life will compensate affected customers for delays and make improvements to its administrative system to ensure this doesn’t happen to Massachusetts consumers again.”

The Attorney General’s Office began investigating Delaware Life’s administration of its annuity contracts after receiving complaints from Massachusetts customers concerning delays. …

May 21, 2018

Maryland Attorney General’s Securities Division Participates in Coordinated International Crypto Crackdown

BALTIMORE, MD (May 21, 2018) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that his office’s Securities Division has taken an enforcement action as part of an international crackdown on fraudulent Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs) and cryptocurrency-related investment products.

As part of “Operation Cryptosweep,” the Securities Division issued a Summary Order to Cease and Desist and Order to Show Cause against Browsers Lab, LLC based in Windsor Mill. Using its website to pitch its token, Browsers Lab represents to investors that the tokens will create a new market, that the funds raised will be used to cover operating expenses, and that discounted tokens will be reserved for founders and loyal contributors to purchase before the official ICO is launched. The company has the right to a hearing before the order becomes final. “Fraudulent activity involving ICOs and cryptocurrency-related investment products is a significant threat to investors in Maryland,” said Attorney…

May 14, 2018

Attorney General Frosh Settles with Nationstar Mortgage LLC, the Largest Non-Bank Mortgage Servicer

BALTIMORE, MD (May 14, 2018) - Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division and the Commissioner of Financial Regulation entered into settlement agreements with Nationstar Mortgage LLC to resolve allegations that it charged homeowners illegal inspection fees.

Nationstar, the nation’s largest non-bank servicer of home mortgages, arranges for property inspections in order to protect the interests of mortgage lenders when homeowners are in
default on their payments. Although Maryland law prohibits passing the cost of these inspections onto homeowners, Nationstar allegedly charged the inspection costs to homeowners until January 1, 2014 for forward loans and February 2016 for reverse mortgages. Nationstar assessed Maryland homeowners over $1 million in inspection fees. “These inspection charges violate state law,” said Attorney General Frosh. “They were performed for the benefit of the lenders, not the benefit of the homeowners. We are pleased that the victims of the illegal charges will...


MICHIGAN

May 31, 2018
Schuette: Detroit Woman Sentenced for Filing False Medicaid Claims, and Embezzling from Non-Profit Methadone Clinic

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that Lajuana Scott, 59, of Detroit, was sentenced to one year in jail and five years on probation after she was convicted of three felony counts: Embezzlement from a Non-Profit or Charitable Organization, Health Care Fraud - False Claim, and Medicaid Fraud – False Claim.

Scott was sentenced on Wednesday May 30, 2018 before Judge Clinton Canady III in the Ingham County Circuit Court. Scott was also ordered to pay $915,000.00 in restitution.

“Not only did this non-profit employee steal nearly one million dollars, but she stole from the taxpayers by falsely billing Medicaid and Medicare from a non-profit tasked with helping those to fight drug addictions,” Schuette said. “I will continue to seek justice for the taxpayers of this great State by aggressively prosecuting individuals who steal from them.” ...

Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469945--,00.html

May 29, 2018
Schuette: Oakland County Man Charged with Multiple Felonies for Allegedly Stealing More Than $60,000 from Clients

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that Ronald Robling and his business, R&S Resale LLC, were charged Tuesday with 13 counts of Embezzlement by an Agent or Trustee and one count of Conducting a Criminal Enterprise in Oakland County.

“Today’s arraignment should serve as a warning to those operating criminal enterprises and stealing from Michigan consumers,” said Schuette. “Here at the Department of Attorney General, we don’t take theft lightly. If you are unlawfully conducting business or stealing from hard-working Michigan residents, we will take the appropriate action to ensure you don’t have the chance to do it again.”

Robling was arraigned on May 29, 2018, before Judge Joseph Longo in the 43rd District Court in
Oakland County. His bond was set at $10,000. ...

- **Original Press Release**: [https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469709--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469709--,00.html)

May 25, 2018

**Schuette’s Elder Financial Crimes Unit Charges West Michigan Man with 14 Felonies After He Allegedly Stole Over $300,000 from Elderly Client**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced his new Elder Financial Crimes Unit has charged Gary “Duke” Haynes 57, Comstock Park with 14 felonies for allegedly stealing over $300,000 from his widowed elderly client.

The charges are as follows:

- One felony count of conducting a criminal enterprise;
- One felony count of embezzlement from a vulnerable adult $100,000 or more;
- Eight felony counts of embezzlement from a vulnerable adult $1,000-$2,000; and
- Four felony counts of Taxes-False Return.

Schuette’s Elder Financial Abuse Unit will be prosecuting this case with Muskegon County Prosecutor DJ Hilson.

“Many of Michigan’s senior citizen have worked all of their lives to save for retirement,” said Schuette. “My office and the Muskegon County Prosecutor’s Office are committed to stopping those who would prey on our seniors when they are the most vulnerable to theft and financial exploitation.” ...

- **Original Press Release**: [https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469587--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469587--,00.html)

May 24, 2018

**Schuette: Rochester Hills Man Sentenced on Fraud and Conspiracy Charges for Using His Contracting Business to Steal Thousands from Prospective Clients**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that John Houston Floyd of Rochester Hills has been sentenced to up to 21 years in prison on multiple felony charges stemming from fraud he committed through his various construction businesses, harming Michigan homeowners and a locally-owned bank.

“When someone betrays the trust of and steals from their customer it is not only disgraceful but illegal,” said Schuette. “Today’s sentence should serve as a reminder to others that there are legal consequences for actions that break the law. Financial crimes ruin lives, setting families back years in savings, and causing hardships with long term impacts.” ...

- **Original Press Release**: [https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469440--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-469440--,00.html)
MINNESOTA

May 30, 2018

Attorney General Swanson and Pharmacy Board Sue Opioid Manufacturer Over Aggressive Marketing of Highly-Addictive Painkiller

Attorney General Lori Swanson and the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy today filed a lawsuit against Insys Therapeutics, Inc., based in Arizona, for illegally marketing a fentanyl painkiller—approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration only to treat breakthrough pain in cancer patients—for other unapproved conditions and at doses many times higher than approved by the FDA.

“To enrich its balance sheet, the company encouraged physicians to prescribe this highly-potent fentanyl product to patients who didn’t have cancer, even though it was only approved for severe breakthrough pain in cancer patients,” said Attorney General Swanson. She added: “The company paid non-oncologists money to incentivize them to prescribe this drug. It called the payments ‘speaker fees’ to skirt a Minnesota law that prohibits pharmaceutical companies from paying gifts to doctors, even though the company was unable to provide evidence that some of the supposed ‘speeches’ had any audience other than the sales agent...


MISSOURI

May 14, 2018

AG Hawley Obtains Judgment Against Robert Dees for Defrauding Missouri Consumers

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley obtained a $124,041.47 judgment on behalf of 19 consumers who were defrauded by Robert Dees and his companies Dees Management LLC and STL Move Properties LLC.

Robert Dees entered into contracts to provide property management services for residential properties owned by consumers. Dees was to locate tenants, collect rent, make necessary maintenance and repairs, and forward rent to the property owners less his fee. Instead, Dees billed the property owners for repairs which were never completed, failed to forward collected rent money, failed to make necessary maintenance and repairs on properties, moved tenants into properties that did not have a valid occupancy permit, and collected security deposits and first month’s rent from potential tenants while failing to actually provide them a residence to reside in. ...

May 10, 2018

AG Hawley Obtains Judgment Against Herbert Miller, Kathleen Miller, and Miller Family Funeral Home for Defrauding Missouri Consumers

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley obtained a $372,561.04 judgment on behalf of 54 Missouri consumers who were defrauded by Herbert Miller, Kathleen Miller, and Miller Family Funeral Home.

Herbert and Kathleen Miller entered into contracts with consumers to provide pre-need funeral services and accepted upfront payments for those services. In 2016, the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors suspended Herbert Miller’s license to act as a funeral director. Despite being legally unable to provide funeral services, Herbert and Kathleen Miller failed to return consumer funds intended for funeral services and refused to provide consumers with the information needed to access their funds. The Attorney General’s investigation revealed that Herbert and Kathleen Miller failed to deposit or retain consumer funds in trust accounts or joint accounts as required by their contracts with consumers. Instead, they diverted the consumers’ funds for personal use and concealed their actions. ...


May 07, 2018

AG Hawley Wins Judgment Against Kasey Hudson for Defrauding Missouri Consumers

Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley obtained a judgment against Chip Masters Construction owner Kasey Hudson of Hannibal, Missouri. Hudson was charged with three counts of violating the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act for defrauding nine Missouri consumers. He was ordered to pay $107,964 in restitution.

Hudson entered into agreements with Missouri consumers to provide driveway paving and resurfacing services. Consumers were told he could repave or resurface their driveway with the same quality as a solid surface county-road at a discounted rate. When the job was complete, Hudson would demand thousands of dollars more than initially quoted in payment, often using intimidation tactics to elicit the money. In one instance, Hudson coerced a consumer to use her vehicle as payment. Days after the work was completed, consumers would discover the quality of their driveways was far below the quality they were promised. In some cases, driveways would be...

**NEVADA**

May 02, 2018

**Attorney General Laxalt Announces Grand Jury Indictment for Housing Scam**

Las Vegas, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Geri Lyn McKinnon, 64, of Gladstone, OR, was indicted by the Clark County Grand Jury on four felony charges for her role in taking title, without authorization, to foreclosed properties owned by Federal National Mortgage Association. The charges include three counts of Theft in the Amount of $3,500 or More, and one count of Pattern of False Representation Concerning Title, all category “B” felonies. The alleged fraudulent acts were committed in the fall of 2015.

According to the indictment, McKinnon recorded grant deeds in the Clark County Recorder’s Office, purporting to be the new owner of three single family homes in Clark County. In fact, the properties actually belonged to the Federal National Mortgage Association and as a result of these misrepresentations, the properties became unmarketable for over two years. ...

➢ **Original Press Release:**

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

May 02, 2018

**State v. James Knee**

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announces that on April 27, 2018, a Merrimack County Grand Jury returned 11 indictments against James E. Knee (age 65), a former Concord, New Hampshire investment adviser with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. and Voya Financial Advisors, Inc., relating to conduct between 2014 and 2017.

The indictments charge Mr. Knee with theft by misapplication, theft by deception, financial exploitation of the elderly, and investment adviser fraud in connection with courses of conduct relating to one of his investment advisory clients from whom he allegedly illegally obtained over $490,397, which he then used for his own personal expenses.

Mr. Knee was also indicted for perjury in connection with statements that he made to the Bureau of Securities Regulation (“BSR”) during its 2016 investigation of Mr. Knee, witness tampering during the State's investigation, and a securities law violation concerning a 2016 Agreement entered into with the BSR. ...

NEW JERSEY

May 29, 2018
Ocean County Couple and Their Home Improvement Companies Plead Guilty to Stealing Over $1.4 Million by Bilking Homeowners Whose Homes Were Damaged by Superstorm Sandy
TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced that an Ocean County couple pleaded guilty today to stealing over $1.4 million from more than 20 victims who hired the couple’s home improvement companies to fix their homes after Superstorm Sandy. The victims paid the couple and their firms to repair or rebuild their homes, primarily using Sandy relief funds, but the couple allegedly diverted much of the money to gamble and buy luxury items, leaving homes in disrepair.

Jeffrey Colmyer, 42, and Tiffany Cimino, 34, of Little Egg Harbor, N.J., pleaded guilty today to charges of theft by failure to make required disposition of property received before Superior Court Judge Guy P. Ryan in Ocean County. Pursuant to the terms of the plea agreements, the state will recommend that Colmyer be sentenced to seven years in state prison, and that Cimino be sentenced to a term of probation. ...


May 23, 2018
New Jersey Bureau of Securities Assesses $100,000 Penalty Against Bergen County Man for Defrauding Investors and Spending Their Funds on Food, Drink, Limos and a “Gentlemen’s Club”
NEWARK – The New Jersey Bureau of Securities today ordered a Bergen County man and his company to pay a $100,000 civil penalty for selling unregistered fraudulent securities and misusing at least $82,000 of investors’ funds on steak dinners, limousine service, visits to a “gentlemen’s club,” and other personal expenses.

Eric J. Bruno, of River Vale, and his company Mirakill Brands, LLC, (“Mirakill”) misled at least eight investors – including at least seven from New Jersey – into buying unregistered securities in the form of membership interests and warrants to buy membership interests in Mirakill. Bruno represented Mirakill to investors as a start-up business that would be developing an antimicrobial agent for industrial use.

In a Summary Order issued today, Christopher W. Gerold, Chief of the New Jersey Bureau of Securities, found that from at least July 2013 to June 2014, Bruno and Mirakill fraudulently raised approximately $137,000 from investors by falsely...


May 21, 2018
New Jersey Bureau of Securities Orders Three Online Cryptocurrency Promoters to Stop Offering Unregistered Securities in the State
NEWARK – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and the Division of Consumer Affairs announced that the Bureau of Securities (“the Bureau”) today issued three emergency orders to stop
online cryptocurrency-related investment entities from fraudulently offering unregistered securities in New Jersey.
The Cease and Desist Orders against Bullcoin Foundation a/k/a Bullcoin Gold (“Bullcoin”),
Trident d/b/a Trident Crypto Index Fund (“Trident”), and Springcryptoinvest were announced
today as part of “Operation Cryptosweep,” an international crackdown on fraudulent Initial
Coin Offerings (“ICOs”) and cryptocurrency-related investment products.
More than 40 other state and provincial securities regulators in the United States and Canada
are participating in the sweep, which is being coordinated by the North American Securities
Administrators Association (NASAA), of which the Bureau is a member.
“New Jersey’s Bureau of Securities has been a national leader in proactively protecting
investors against the significant threat of fraudulent activity involving initial coin offerings and
cryptocurrency-related investment products,” said Attorney...
Under a settlement that resolves a joint state-federal investigation, Ranco Construction, of Southampton, will pay $1.5 million overall – with $499,886 going to the State. The settlement flows from an investigation of Ranco’s labor practices in New Jersey conducted by the Division of Law’s Government and Healthcare Fraud Section in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey.

The investigation began after a former Ranco employee filed a federal qui tam (or “whistleblower”) lawsuit against the company. In that lawsuit, the ex-employee alleged that Ranco routinely entered into...


May 01, 2018
NJ Consumer Affairs Files Second Lawsuit Against 21st Century Auto Group Alleging the Dealership and Owner Dmitry Zeldin Continue to Engage in Deceptive Business Practices

NEWARK – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced a lawsuit against luxury used auto dealership 21st Century Auto Group, Inc. (“21st Century Auto Group”), and its owner Dmitry Zeldin, for allegedly engaging in deceptive business practices, including many of the same practices alleged in a prior lawsuit the State filed against the Springfield-based dealership.

In a Complaint filed in Superior Court in Union County, the State alleges that Zeldin and 21st Century Auto Group repeatedly violated consumer protection laws and regulations by engaging in a pattern of deceptive practices that include failing to disclose prior damage to used motor vehicles, continuing to advertise motor vehicles after they had been sold in an attempt to “bait-and-switch” customers, and failing to honor advertised and negotiated prices of used motor vehicles. ...


NEW MEXICO

May 31, 2018
AG Balderas Secures Indictments Against Man Alleged to Have Exploited Two Albuquerque Seniors by Embezzling Over $1 Million

Albuquerque, NM – This afternoon, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced that James Lambros was indicted by a Bernalillo County Grand Jury on 32 felony charges including Money Laundering, Larceny, Embezzlement, Tampering with Evidence, Tax Fraud, Forgery and Theft of a Credit Card for allegedly stealing over $1 million from two elderly victims, ages eighty-five (85) and ninety five (95), and one count of Child Exploitation for allegedly possessing images of child sexual abuse.

“Protecting New Mexico senior citizens and other vulnerable populations from exploitation is a top priority of the Office of the Attorney General and I’ve dedicated significant resources to
preventing and combating this epidemic,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “While I cannot comment specifically on the facts of the pending case, I want New Mexicans to have a heightened sense of awareness around the dangers of mail fraud, financial theft, and the tools needed to protect themselves against this...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG_Balderas_Secures_Indictments_Against_Man_Alleged_to_Have_Exploited_Two_Albuquerque_Seniors_by_Embezzling_Over_%24241_Million.pdf

May 29, 2018

AG balderas awards $220,000 in settlement money to seven governmental institutions across new mexico

Albuquerque, NM – This afternoon, Attorney General Hector Balderas awarded over $220,000 in settlement funds to public institutions across New Mexico for their technology proposals to better serve New Mexicans. The dynamic random-access memory (DRAM) litigation stems from a multi-state lawsuit challenging price-fixing for DRAM that resulted in over-charging for DRAM-containing equipment like computers and printers. The lawsuit alleged a conspiracy to fix, raise, maintain, and/or stabilize the prices of DRAM chips that allegedly resulted in overcharges to consumers and government purchasers of DRAM or products containing DRAM. DRAM is an electronic component that allows for storage and retrieval of electronic data. “Over $220,000 in settlement funds will be invested directly in technology projects around New Mexico from the Four Corners to the East Mountains, from northern New Mexico to our southern border,” said Attorney General Balderas. “Investing in technology, especially in our rural communities, will improve the services provided to...


NEW YORK

May 30, 2018

A.G. Underwood Announces Criminal Indictment Of Queens Investment Advisor For Defrauding Elderly Clients Of Nearly $5 Million

NEW YORK - Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a 99-count criminal indictment charging Queens investment advisor Dean S. Mustaphalli — the owner and operator of Mustaphalli Capital Partners Fund, LP — with operating a multi-million dollar securities fraud scheme. Mustaphalli allegedly engaged in a scheme to defraud investors — many of whom were elderly and at or near retirement — out of their savings by investing them in his hedge fund without
their knowledge or consent. During the relevant time period, Mustaphalli’s hedge fund collapsed, losing 92% of its value. The Attorney General’s indictment, unsealed in Queens County Supreme Court, charges Mustaphalli with Grand Larceny, Forgery, and Securities Fraud violations under the Martin Act, among other charges. If convicted, Mustaphalli faces up to 10 to 20 years in prison.

According to the Attorney General’s criminal indictment, Mustaphalli’s scheme brought in more than $5 million from 22 victims between June...


May 29, 2018

A.G. Underwood Announces Settlement With Scam Veterans' Charity

ORANGE COUNTY – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood announced a settlement agreement with the Wounded Warriors Foundation of Orange County, Inc. (“WWFOC”) for illegally collecting thousands of dollars in raffle tickets without ever conducting a raffle. WWFOC must immediately dissolve and pay $4,200 in restitution to the consumers it defrauded.

“New Yorkers should be confident that their charitable donations are going to legitimate organizations that will use these funds to carry out the mission they advertise,” said Attorney General Underwood. “Our office will hold accountable organizations that break the law and take advantage of the public’s generosity.”

The Wounded Warriors Foundation of Orange County, Inc. – not affiliated with the national Wounded Warrior Project – sold raffle tickets at $50 per ticket to members of the public and claimed that the raffle’s grand prize was a new 2016 Ford Focus. WWFOC also claimed that all proceeds would go toward purchasing mobility and...


May 29, 2018

A.G. Underwood And State Police Superintendent Beach Announce Takedown Of Telephone Extortion Ring

SYRACUSE – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood and State Police Superintendent George P. Beach II today announced the arrests of ringleader Giovani Ayala-Rodriguez, a.k.a. “George Peters,” 27, of Puerto Rico, and co-conspirators Eligio Jimenez-Correa, 40, of Syracuse, and Orlando Gonzalez-Rivera, 26, of Syracuse, for their roles in an elaborate telephone extortion scheme that operated in Onondaga and other counties throughout New York. The indictment, unsealed in Onondaga County Court, charges the defendants with multiple counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (a Class “C” felony), attempted Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (a Class “D” felony), Coercion in the First Degree (a Class “D” felony), and Conspiracy in Fourth Degree (a Class “E” felony).
“As we allege, the defendants engaged in a shameful scheme to terrorize and rob New Yorkers,” said Attorney General Underwood. “Today’s takedown should send an unmistakable message to those who seek to extort New Yorkers:…


May 25, 2018
A.G. Underwood Sues To Compel Compliance In Ongoing Investigation Of North Country Manufactured Home-And-Land Retailer
WATERTOWN – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced an order directing Walker’s Manufactured Housing, Inc. (“Walker’s”) and its owner, Stanley Hall, to explain their failure to sit for testimony as required by the Attorney General’s subpoena. Following multiple consumer complaints, the Attorney General’s office opened an investigation into the company’s business practices and issued a subpoena for Stanley Hall to appear for questioning. Mr. Hall refused to answer questions, improperly asserting a blanket Fifth Amendment privilege, and terminated the hearing. The order issued by Supreme Court Judge James P. McClusky of Jefferson County compels Walker’s and Stanley Hall to explain why the Judge shouldn’t further order their compliance with the Attorney General’s investigation.

“...my office will aggressively investigate retailers of manufactured home and land deals who shirk their legal obligations to provide homes that are safe, durable, and suitable for occupancy,” Attorney General Underwood said. “Transparency and fair dealing is...


May 23, 2018
A.G. Underwood Announces Lawsuit Against Capital Region Wedding Photographer For Failing To Deliver Photos, Refund Deposits
SARATOGA SPRINGS — Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a lawsuit filed in Albany County Supreme Court against wedding photographer Scott Kretschmann, owner of Kretschmann Studio, for allegedly failing to deliver wedding photographs and/or albums to at least sixteen couples, and for failing to refund substantial deposits paid by five couples whose weddings Kretschmann did not photograph.

The lawsuit alleges that from approximately 2013 through 2016, Kretschmann operated a photography studio in Saratoga Springs, through which he marketed and sold photography services and packages that typically cost between $4,000 and $6,000. Kretschmann photographed weddings and accepted full payment but repeatedly failed to deliver to couples the photographs and/or albums they had paid for. In several instances, couples did not receive any photographs or digital images from their special day, nor did Kretschmann refund their money. The Attorney General’s lawsuit alleges that Kretschmann also accepted deposits of
approximately $3,000 from at...


May 16, 2018

**Acting A.G. Underwood Announces Lawsuit To Shut Down Pet Store Chain, Alleging Improper Care Of Puppies And Widespread Fraud And Deception**

WATERTOWN – Acting Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a lawsuit against Bell Pet Company, LLC and its owners, Theodore and Sheila Bell, who operate a chain of pet stores with locations in Watertown, Albany, Poughkeepsie, and Queensbury, known as The Pet Zone. The lawsuit alleges that The Pet Zone has sold many puppies to consumers without first having the dogs examined by a veterinarian as required by law, engaged in persistent fraud by failing to notify consumers when the puppy they purchase received necessary pre-sale medical treatment, and violated the Pet Lemon Law by failing to provide timely reimbursement for veterinarian expenses consumers incurred after purchasing a sick dog from the stores. Following an investigation by the Attorney General’s office, Supreme Court Justice James P. McClusky issued a temporary restraining order today prohibiting The Pet Zone from obtaining any new dogs for sale and placing additional oversight on the...


May 07, 2018

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Consent Order And Judgment Against Buffalo-Niagara Home Improvement Contractor For Violating Previous Court Order**

BUFFALO – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a Consent Order and Judgment resolving his office’s lawsuit against contractor Robert B. Cooper, owner of “Robert’s Paving and Excavating,” for defrauding consumers and violating a previous court order. Cooper, who previously did business as “Finger Lakes Asphalt,” was barred by a 2014 court order from the home contracting business until he complied with New York State Law. However, in November 2017, the Attorney General brought a case against Cooper after consumer complaints revealed that he continued to operate his paving business under a new name and in violation of the law. The Attorney General’s subsequent investigation found that 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. ...

May 03, 2018

A.G. Schneiderman Secures Court Order Directing Relief For Pet Owners Defrauded By Unlicensed Abbingdon Hill Pet Cemetery

ORANGE COUNTY – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office secured a court order granting restitution for pet owners affected by the fraudulent practices of Abbingdon Hill Pet Cemetery and Crematory, Inc. in Montgomery, NY — after the cemetery continued to operate while unlicensed and collect fees from consumers without providing the services offered such as maintenance, burials, and cremations. The Attorney General also secured the dissolution of the pet cemetery corporation and property transfer to a new not-for-profit corporation formed by pet owners to ensure all animals may remain in the cemetery.

“Consumers should be able to trust that businesses will provide the services for which they’ve paid,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “This court order secures relief to the consumers affected, while transferring the property to a new not-for-profit to ensure continuity for families with pets buried at the cemetery. My office is committed to protecting...


NORTH CAROLINA

May 15, 2018

Attorney General Josh Stein Takes Leading Opioid Manufacturer Purdue Pharma to Court

(RALEIGH) - Attorney General Josh Stein today filed a lawsuit against drug manufacturer Purdue Pharma over its marketing practices for prescription opioids. The lawsuit alleges that Purdue made deceptive and misleading statements to overcome prescribers’ and patients’ concerns and objections.

“As detailed in the complaint I filed today, Purdue Pharma repeatedly deceived prescribers and patients in its pursuit of profits — and far too many North Carolinians lost their loved ones as a result,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “Purdue crossed the line, and I intend to hold them accountable.”

The lawsuit alleges many examples of deceptive marketing messages that Purdue pushed: “Pseudo-addiction” is a concept Purdue hyped to downplay concerns about opioid addiction. With no valid scientific basis, the company aggressively marketed the idea that people often engage in desperate, drug-seeking behavior not because they are addicted, but because they are actually not receiving enough opioids. Some of Purdue’s own doctors...

May 14, 2018

**Wilmington Man Indicted in Alleged Fence Scam**

(CINCINNATI)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced that a Wilmington man has been indicted for allegedly taking tens of thousands of dollars from southwest Ohio consumers for fence installations he never provided.

Phillip R. Sholler Jr., 41, was indicted by a Hamilton County grand jury on the following charges:
- Theft from the elderly, third-degree felonies (two counts)
- Theft from the elderly, fourth-degree felonies (four counts)
- Theft, fourth-degree felonies (two counts)
- Theft, fifth-degree felonies (four counts)

Sholler, who did business as Sholler Fence LLC, is accused of stealing about $48,000 from six homeowners between July and December 2017. According to investigators, he took cash or checks from the homeowners but never installed the fencing and never delivered any materials. The case was investigated by the Ohio Attorney General’s Economic Crimes Unit and the Evendale Police Department. An attorney with the Economic Crimes Unit was appointed by the Hamilton County Prosecutor to handle the...


May 11, 2018

**Attorney General DeWine Files Consumer Protection Lawsuit Against Discovery Tours**

(CLEVELAND)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today filed a consumer protection lawsuit against Discovery Tours, a tour company accused of taking money for services it never provided to families and schools across Ohio.

The lawsuit accuses the company of violating Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act by failing to deliver promised services and operating in a precarious financial situation.

“We believe Discovery Tours violated consumer protection laws and must be held accountable,” Attorney General DeWine said. “Families and schools across the state trusted this company, and their trust was betrayed.”

Since May 2, the Ohio Attorney General’s Office has received over 700 complaints about Discovery Tours, primarily from parents who said they had paid the company hundreds of dollars for a school trip before the company canceled trips and shut down. In some cases, they said their kids had been looking forward to the trip for years or that they had held fundraisers to be...

May 30, 2018

**Attorney General Shapiro Secures $20K in Restitution for Couples Jilted by Philadelphia Wedding Venue**

HARRISBURG – Following the unexpected closing of a Fishtown wedding venue in April, Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced that four couples left suddenly without a location for their big day will receive full restitution for their deposits – $20,250 in total – as part of a settlement secured by the Office of Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Christos Aivazoglou, also known as Chris Voz, entered into the settlement on behalf of Skybox Events and CCP Catering and Hospitality, LLC. The settlement requires the businesses to refund full deposits paid for events that can no longer occur Aivazoglou’s business was operating illegally on an expired city permit.

“Skybox accepted deposits and reservations from these Pennsylvania consumers – even though the business was operating illegally,” Attorney General Shapiro. “When the venue was shut down, couples lost their deposit and were left scrambling to find a new wedding location. My Office’s Bureau of...


May 23, 2018

**Shutting Down a Fraudulent Prescription Pill Mill**

HARRISBURG – Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced charges against 10 people who used home computers to write fake prescriptions and obtain more than 3,500 Oxycodone pills and other drugs across 17 Pennsylvania counties.

The prescription pill mill was run by Tracie Peurifoy, 37, of the 1300 block of Devereaux Street, Philadelphia, who created fake prescriptions on her home computer using the names of physicians from across Pennsylvania – none of whom were involved in the scheme. Peurifoy is charged with violating the Controlled Substance Act, conspiracy, and corrupt organizations.

“We’re prosecuting dealers who are fueling this crisis, whether it’s heroin on street corners or illegal pills from a doctor’s pad,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. “Prescription drug abuse is fueling the opioid crisis in Pennsylvania, and my office is focused on stopping the illegal diversion of these powerful drugs.”

Studies show that 80 percent of heroin users began their drug abuse by...

Attorney General Shapiro Announces Restitution for 13 Consumers who Paid Fees to Personal Care Home that Suddenly Closed

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced restitution for 13 Pennsylvania consumers — including senior citizens — after reaching a settlement with a personal care home that closed unexpectedly and had failed to provide refunds to residents who prepaid for room and board.

Michael Boggs, owner of Meadowview Manor, accepted advance payments from residents and then failed to provide refunds to residents after suddenly closing the facility in Mifflin County in January, 2016.

Restitution will be paid by Meadowview Manor as part of the settlement to residents who pre-paid for room and board plus additional services for January 2016. Refunds provided to the 13 Pennsylvania consumers range from $2,000 to $3,300, depending on the consumers’ pre-payment. The restitution total amount is $35,471.

“When you assist your parents in finding a personal care home where they can live in peace and dignity, you should know they will be treated with respect — not...”


CASE UPDATE: Jamaican Lottery Scam Ringleader Charged with Felonies for Bilking Seniors in PA and USA

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced the arrest of a Jamaican man believed to be a ringleader in the Jamaican Lottery Scam. The victims of this scam thought they were paying taxes on their winnings in the lottery – their money was actually being routed to scam artists in Jamaica.

Kristoff Cain, 22, has been charged with corrupt organizations, theft by deception and other felony crimes. Agents from the Office of Attorney General’s Organized Crime Section, working with local and federal partners, identified Cain as a ringleader after last year’s arrest of Audrey Huff. Huff, a Pittsburgh woman who was serving as a mule in the Jamaican Lottery Scam, wired more than $295,000 in funds stolen from Pennsylvanians and Americans to scammers in Jamaica, including Cain.

“Kristoff Cain is in custody thanks to very strong law enforcement collaboration with our federal and state partners,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “I want...


CASE UPDATE: Uniontown Funeral Home Director Faces New Charges for Stealing $244K from 31 Elderly Clients Who Pre-Paid for their Funerals

May 02, 2018

May 10, 2018

May 14, 2018
HARRISBURG — Following an earlier arrest and set of charges in January, Attorney General Josh Shapiro and Fayette County District Attorney Richard Bower today announced additional charges against a Uniontown funeral home director for stealing another $244,377 from elderly clients who had pre-paid for their own funerals. Investigators believe Stephen E. Kezmarsky III, 50, of South Pennsylvania Avenue, Uniontown, stole a total of $528,770 from his clients between October 2010 and March 2017. Kezmarsky operated Kezmarsky Funeral Home in Uniontown. After Attorney General Shapiro personally announced the first round of charges at a January press conference in the Fayette County Courthouse, an additional 31 victims came forward, bringing the total number of victims identified so far to 82. Today Kezmarsky was charged with an additional 89 felony and misdemeanor counts of theft by deception, theft by failure to make required disposition of funds and insurance fraud. In total, Kezmarsky stands charged with more...


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PUERTO RICO

May 11, 2018

Office of Monopolistic Affairs (OAM) of the Department of Justice occupies more than 15,000 pirated articles

(San Juan) - The Secretary of Justice, Wanda Vázquez Garced, informed that the Office of Monopolistic Affairs (OAM) of the Department of Justice, in collaboration with special agents of the Internal Security Office of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service (ICE) -HSI) and Internal Revenue Agents of the Department of the Treasury, completed three search and search warrants, occupying approximately 15,200 articles of illegal merchandise or piracy. The Assistant Secretary of the OAM, Denise Maldonado Rosa, informed that the registration orders were processed at the Everybody's Fashion stores in Caguas, and Everybody's Fashion and Karters, both in Bayamón. This last one is the third time that it is intervened by the OAM and, in this occasion, it was in which the greater amount of merchandise was occupied. During the operation, portfolios, glasses, watches, and jewelery copies of different recognized brands were seized. ...

- Original Press Release: http://www.justicia.pr.gov/oficina-de-asuntos-monopolisticos-oam-del-departamento-de-justicia-ocupa-mas-de-15000-articulos-pirateados/
SOUTH DAKOTA

May 17, 2018

Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Office asks Restlawn Memory Garden Customers to Come Forward

PIERRE, S.D. - Attorney General Marty Jackley confirms today the investigation into Restlawn Memory Gardens located in Huron is still ongoing. In the fall of 2017, the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division began receiving inquiries into the business practices of Restlawn and has received 50 formal complaints to date.

“Consumers who have entered into a contract with this company and have not already filed a complaint are asked to do so immediately,” said Jackley.

Consumers can file a complaint directly on the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection website at https://consumer.sd.gov. For any additional information consumers can email the Office at consumerhelp@state.sd.us or call 800-300-1986.


TENNESSEE

May 15, 2018

Tennessee Attorney General Sues Purdue Pharma

Attorney General Herbert H. Slattery III, along with a bipartisan group of Attorneys General, sued Purdue Pharma today for its unlawful marketing and promotion of OxyContin and other drugs and its role in causing and prolonging the opioid epidemic in Tennessee.

The State’s lawsuit, filed in Knox County Circuit Court, alleges Purdue violated the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act, violated its 2007 settlement with the State, and created a statewide public nuisance by interfering with the health of Tennesseans and the commercial marketplace.

Attorney General Slattery said, “Our Office has conducted an extensive investigation into Purdue’s highly aggressive marketing practices and other unlawful conduct. We believe Purdue’s conduct has been unconscionable, and we intend to hold the company accountable. Three Tennesseans are dying each day from opioid-related overdoses, and we are committed to the hard work that needs to be done to address this tragedy.”

The allegations in the State’s approximately 270-page complaint demonstrate...

TEXAS

May 07, 2018

AG Paxton’s Consumer Protection Division Stops Sales of Unlawful and Potentially Dangerous Contact Lenses at 37 Retailers and Distributors in Texas

Following an exhaustive investigation, Attorney General Ken Paxton’s Consumer Protection Division today announced that it secured Assurances of Voluntary Compliance with 37 store owners and wholesale distribution companies to stop selling unlawful and potentially dangerous contact lenses in Texas. The businesses have made refunds available to consumers and will pay more than $140,000 in civil penalties and attorneys’ fees to the state of Texas. Attorney General Paxton’s office began its investigation in March 2016 after undercover sweeps by the San Antonio Police Department turned up more than two dozen stores selling contact lenses without requiring consumers to provide a prescription – violating the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act and the Texas Optometry Act.

Information provided by retailers led to subsequent investigations by the attorney general’s office into the distributors of the contact lenses. Ten companies – located primarily in San Antonio, Houston and Dallas – marketed the lenses to novelty shops,…


VIRGIN ISLANDS

May 14, 2018

AG Walker announces largest payout to V.I. consumers directly

ST. THOMAS, V.I. - Attorney General Claude Earl Walker, on behalf of the US Virgin Islands, today announced a settlement with Takata Corporation and its U.S. subsidiary, TK Holdings, Inc., over the Virgin Islands’ claims that Takata engaged in unlawful practices in connection with the manufacturing, marketing and sale of its dangerous airbags installed in vehicles sold to Virgin Islands consumers.

At a joint press conference with Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Delvin Carrington and Commissioner of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Lawrence Olive held at the Department of Justice’s conference room, AG Walker said today’s settlement resolves the Virgin Islands’ claims against the Takata companies after a year and a half of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice’s (DOJ) successful prosecution of the car parts maker.

Takata, which filed for bankruptcy last year, agreed to pay the Virgin Islands, along with two other jurisdictions – the states of Hawaii…

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING ANNOUNCES ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS

RICHMOND (May 11, 2018) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that he has taken enforcement actions against three unlicensed contractors operating in Virginia. The three unlicensed contractors are Ricky Harmon Pettit, operating under Pettit’s Home Improvement, Ricky H. Pettit Home Improvement, and R. H. Pettit Builders in Central and Northern Virginia; Timothy Oneal White, operating as White Renovation and Construction and White Renovations in the City of Roanoke; and Gerald Lee Whitfield, operating as Whitfield’s Home Improvements in the City of Chesapeake. Each of the unlicensed contractors allegedly committed numerous violations of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act, which generally prohibits the use of any deception, fraud, false pretense, false promise, or misrepresentation in connection with a consumer transaction. ...


HERRING FILES SUIT AGAINST "SERVICE DOGS BY WARREN RETRIEVERS"

RICHMOND (May 8, 2018) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that he has filed a lawsuit against Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers, Inc., a Virginia-based company that sells purported service dogs to consumers nationwide, and its CEO, Charles D. Warren, Jr., for alleged violations of the Virginia Consumer Protection Act and the Virginia Solicitation of Contributions law. The suit alleges that Service Dogs and Warren sold so-called “diabetic alert dogs” for tens of thousands of dollars, when they were often delivering poorly-trained puppies with significant behavioral issues and inadequate skills or training to notify a customer of a potentially life-threatening high or low blood sugar situation. Service Dogs and Warren also misled customers and charitable donors about certain aspects of the business’s payment structure, and lied about Warren having served in the armed forces. ...


ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING ALLEGES ILLEGAL PREDATORY LOANS IN SUIT AGAINST ONE OF VIRGINIA’S LARGEST ONLINE LENDERS

RICHMOND, VA (May 4, 2018) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring announced today that his Predatory Lending Unit has filed a lawsuit against Net Credit, one of the largest online lenders operating in Virginia, for lending and collections practices that allegedly violate the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. The lawsuit alleges that Chicago-based Net Credit issued loans of
$1,000 to $10,000 to more than 47,000 Virginia borrowers between 2012 and 2018 with interest rates from 34% to 155%. In one loan cited in the complaint, a Virginia borrower was responsible for more than $6,000 in repayments for just $2,000 borrowed. …


WASHINGTON

May 30, 2018

Toshiba to pay $1.3M for price-fixing scheme affecting millions of Washingtonians

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced that Toshiba Corporation, a multinational conglomerate headquartered in Japan, will pay $1.3 million as part of the Attorney General’s price-fixing lawsuit against manufacturers of a component used in television and computer screens called cathode ray tube, or CRT.

The lawsuit alleges Toshiba and other CRT manufacturers, including LG, Panasonic, Hitachi, Chungwha, Philips and Samsung, engaged in a price-fixing scheme to drive up the cost of CRTs from 1995 to 2007. During those 12 years, the price-fixing conspiracy caused millions of Washington consumers to be overcharged for their CRT televisions and computer monitors.

The consent decree, which will be filed in King County Superior Court, holds Toshiba accountable for its role in the price-fixing scheme. Ferguson will distribute the bulk of the $1.3 million through a claims process to Washington consumers and state agencies that purchased CRTs during the conspiracy. …


May 30, 2018

Court orders company accused of scamming foreclosed homeowners to halt deceptive practices

OLYMPIA — A King County Superior Court judge has ordered a company accused of scamming foreclosed homeowners out of equity in the form of surplus funds from the foreclosure sale to halt its deceptive practices while the state’s lawsuit progresses.

On May 18, Ferguson filed a lawsuit against Kirkland- and Portland-based Real Estate Investment Network, LLC (REIN), which had been charging up to 67 percent of surplus funds it recovers for homeowners following a foreclosure sale. These fees amounted to tens of thousands of dollars for each homeowner. Judge Catherine Moore granted an agreed order for a preliminary injunction, which, among other restrictions, prevents REIN from collecting more than the 5 percent allowed by law.

“My office is a watchdog for homeowners facing foreclosure,” Ferguson said. “I will hold companies that prey on homeowners facing foreclosure accountable.”
With the real estate market booming, foreclosure sales can bring in more money than is owed...


May 18, 2018
AG Ferguson sues company for scamming foreclosed homeowners
OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a consumer protection lawsuit against Kirkland- and Portland-based Real Estate Investment Network, LLC (REIN), accusing the company of scamming foreclosed homeowners out of equity in the form of surplus funds from the sale. These surplus funds can amount to tens of thousands of dollars from each homeowner.

“Foreclosure can be a confusing and vulnerable time for homeowners,” Ferguson said. “Surplus funds from a foreclosure sale can be the lifeline a person needs to get back on their feet. I will hold companies accountable for preying on homeowners facing foreclosure.”

In a lawsuit filed yesterday in King County Superior Court, Ferguson alleges that REIN violates the Consumer Protection Act by employing a high-pressure sales pitch that creates a false sense of urgency, misrepresents the content and purpose of documents and the process for recovering surplus funds. The lawsuit further alleges REIN deceives homeowners about the amount...


WEST VIRGINIA
May 06, 2018
Attorney General Morrisey Files Demand For Sweeping Reforms in Fight Against Opioid Abuse
CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey unilaterally sued the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and this weekend filed a formal demand to underscore why sweeping reforms that stem from his lawsuit are crucial to eradicating opioid abuse and addiction.

The Attorney General filed his formal demand late Friday in support of a DEA proposal that embraces his suggestions on how to eliminate a root cause of pill dumping, such as the oversupply of opioid painkillers that has flooded West Virginia for the past two decades. “The excess narcotics supply naturally flowed to the devastated coal fields of West Virginia and other communities that were hardest hit by the recession,” Attorney General Morrisey wrote. “As every West Virginian now knows, next came overdoses, recoveries, and overdoses where no recovery was possible. All of this was made possible because of a broken quota system that failed to protect the public from euphoria producing...

➤ Original Press Release: https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?e=5699e8e411&u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=560a719052
May 03, 2018

**Attorney General Morrisey: Strict Enforcement of Antitrust Pact Will Keep Costs Down, Ensure Competition in Hospital Merger**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey issued the following statement regarding Cabell Huntington Hospital’s completed acquisition of St. Mary’s Medical Center in Huntington.

“While this week’s completed merger of Cabell Huntington Hospital and St. Mary’s Medical Center means great things for Huntington and the surrounding region, it also begins strict enforcement of the 10-year antitrust agreement between my office and both hospitals.

“That agreement ensures strict monitoring of health care costs because for the next decade any rate increase sought by Cabell Huntington Hospital will be subject to review and approval by our office.

“Additionally, within 90 days, the antitrust agreement requires Cabell Huntington Hospital to submit to our office a statement of activities detailing how the merged entity will achieve efficiencies and quality enhancements.

“Within six months, the agreement also requires Cabell Huntington Hospital to develop and report to our office benchmarks to ensure quality health care...


May 01, 2018

**Attorney General Morrisey Reaches $2.65M Settlement in VW Emissions Scandal, Saves Half Million in Legal Fees**

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey reached a greater than $2.65-million settlement with Volkswagen and two other automakers, while saving West Virginia more than a half million dollars in legal fees and likely exceeding the payout it would have received in multistate litigation.

Volkswagen, Porsche and Audi, by way of its association with Volkswagen, agreed to pay the state $2,654,200. The automakers admitted to using devices to cheat government emissions tests and agreed to refrain from unfair and deceptive practices in future dealings with West Virginia consumers.

“This settlement marks a huge victory for West Virginia consumers,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Trust is a crucial element to the consumer-business relationship. This should send a strong message that our office will vigorously pursue anyone whose actions erode that relationship.”

The Attorney General unilaterally sued Volkswagen in October 2015, handled the litigation within his office and chose not to participate in a...
Wisconsin DOJ Files Charges Against Man for Allegedly Luring Investors to Company and Embezzling Funds

SHAWANO, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) arrested and filed criminal charges against Andrew J. Reyment of Cecil, Wis., alleging that the defendant embezzled approximately $350,000 from investors. Reyment was charged with seven counts of embezzlement and is accused of a theft scheme in which he allegedly made false representations to investors about his fishing lure company and then illegally and without consent, converted the investor funds for his own personal use. The Shawano County Sheriff’s Office assisted DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) agents with the arrest of Reyment in Shawano on May 23, and he was transferred to Brown County Jail on May 24, where he is being charged with the crimes.

The criminal complaint alleges Reyment posted on multiple social media sites that he was seeking investors for his corporation, Screamline Lures. As a result of the posts, several...

Multistate Cases

Cambridge Analytica and Facebook

States include:

1. Delaware - (2018-05-04) One-Fifth of Delawareans May Have Had Facebook Data Exposed
   https://news.delaware.gov/2018/05/04/fbb/

2. Kansas - (2018-05-08) AG Derek Schmidt: Facebook responds to states’ inquiry about data privacy


   https://atg.sd.gov/OurOffice/Media/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=2037

6. Virginia - (2018-05-02) IN RESPONSE TO AG HERRING’S REQUEST, FACEBOOK REVEALS 1.7 MILLION VIRGINIANS AFFECTED BY REPORTED MISUSE OF PERSONAL DATA
Protect Retirees Against Unscrupulous Financial Advisors

States include:


See also previous articles about *Protect Retirees Against Unscrupulous Financial Advisors*.

Coalition of 20 Attorneys General Urging for a National Injunction to Protect Women’s Access to Family Planning

States include:
   and  

2. **Illinois** - (2018-05-15) ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN FILES AMICUS BRIEF URGING PROTECTION OF WOMEN’S ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING  
   http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2018_05/20180515b.html


Coalition of Attorneys General Successfully Intervene to Defend the Affordable Care Act in Federal Lawsuit Filed in Texas

States include:
1. **California** - (2018-05-16) Attorney General Becerra, Coalition of 16 Attorneys General Successfully Intervene to Defend the Affordable Care Act in Federal Lawsuit Filed in Texas

See also prior articles to *Defend the Affordable Care Act in Texas*.

Status of State Opioid Investigations

States include:
1. **Florida** - (2018-05-15) Attorney General Bondi Sues Major Opioid Manufacturers and Distributors

2. **Illinois** - (2018-05-21) ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN LEADS COALITION IN SUPPORT OF STIFFER PENALTIES FOR IRRESPONSIBLE DRUG MANUFACTURERS
   http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2018_05/20180521.html

   https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/opioid-manufacturers-attorney-general-grassley/


5. **New Mexico** - (2018-05-21) AG Balderas to Congress: Create Stiffer Penalties for Irresponsible Drug Manufacturers
   (2018-05-15) Opioid Companies Try Dirty Trick; AG Balderas Battles Back


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**Attorneys Generals Condemn Federal Action Rolling Back Protections For Seniors In Nursing Homes**

**States include:**


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**Deadline for Western Union Claims**

**States include:**

1. **Alabama** - (2018-05-08) AG STEVE MARSHALL REMINDS CONSUMERS OF MAY 31 DEADLINE TO MAKE CLAIMS IN WESTERN UNION CASE [https://ago.alabama.gov/News#7892](https://ago.alabama.gov/News#7892)


See also [Earlier Reports on Western Union](#).
Medicaid Fraud

ARKANSAS

May 15, 2018
Rutledge Announces Pulaski County Woman Sentenced for Medicaid Fraud
LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Pulaski County woman on Medicaid fraud charges.
Shavita Wilson pleaded guilty to Medicaid fraud in Pulaski County Circuit Court. She was sentenced to 3 years probation and must pay $600 in fines and court costs. Wilson has already paid $5,000 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund.
“Shavita Wilson took advantage of a vital safety net for many Arkansans and is now paying for the crime she committed,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Abusing the Medicaid system is unacceptable and harms the Arkansans who depend on it for important care. The Attorney General’s Office will continue to investigate and prosecute these crimes to hold those who take advantage of the Medicaid system accountable for their actions.”
Wilson, 46, of Little Rock, pleaded guilty to one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class C felony, for making false statements while...


COLORADO

May 03, 2018
AG Coffman Warns Colorado Consumers about Scams Ahead of New Medicare Cards Being Issued
DENVER— Today Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman issued a warning to Colorado consumers to be on the lookout for scammers calling, emailing or texting and claiming to be officials from Medicare. These predators are using the distribution of new Medicare cards as an opportunity to trick consumers into giving up their money or personal information. The scammers may threaten to cancel health benefits, or claim to need payment or private information to issue a new Medicare card.
This April, Medicare will begin to issue new Medicare cards to all beneficiaries. To help better protect consumers’ identities, these new cards will no longer contain Social Security numbers. Instead, Medicare will assign a unique number to each patient that can be used for doctor visits and medical claims.
“Medicare will not call consumers offering to replace their cards, they’ll never seek personal information or charge you to replace a card,” said Attorney General...

Crawford County sisters ordered to repay $3,000 for Medicaid Fraud

PITTSBURG – (May 23, 2018) – A pair of Crawford County sisters were ordered yesterday to repay more than $3,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after being found guilty of Medicaid Fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Amanda Forbes, 43, and Melissa Forbes, 47, of Pittsburg, each pleaded no contest in March to one felony count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program and one felony count of conspiracy to make a false claim to the Medicaid program. Judge Curtis I. Loy yesterday ordered the defendants to repay $3,116.83 to the Kansas Medicaid program. Judge Loy also sentenced each defendant to 24 months of probation. 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.

Emporia woman sentenced to 14 months in prison, ordered to repay $12,000 for Medicaid fraud

EMPORIA – (May 17, 2018) – An Emporia woman was sentenced yesterday to more than a year in prison and ordered to repay more than $12,000 to the Kansas Medicaid Program after pleading guilty to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Jennifer Flores, 40, pleaded guilty in January in Lyon County District Court to two felony counts of making a false claim to the Medicaid program. Yesterday, Judge W. Lee Fowler sentenced Flores to 14 months in the Kansas Department of Corrections. Fowler also ordered Flores to repay $12,869.83 to the Kansas Medicaid Program and reimburse the attorney general’s office for the costs of the investigation. 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.

Jackson County woman ordered to repay more than $4,500 for Medicaid fraud

HOLTON – (May 11, 2018) – A Jackson County woman was ordered today to repay more than $4,500 to the Kansas Medicaid Program after pleading guilty to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Lisa Lynn Allen, 56, of Soldier, pleaded guilty in April in Jackson County District Court to one felony count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program. Today, Judge Norbert Marek
ordered Allen to repay $4,511.72 to the Kansas Medicaid Program. Judge Marek also sentenced Allen to 24 months probation with an underlying jail sentence of 6 months. Convictions such as this one may also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program. An investigation revealed that Allen billed Medicaid for services provided as a personal care attendant for a Medicaid beneficiary while on the job with another employer. There were approximately 101...


LOUISIANA

May 08, 2018

**Minden Woman Arrested for Stealing Nearly $400k from Elderly Residents Pleads Guilty**

BATON ROUGE, LA - Following her arrest last year by Attorney General Jeff Landry’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, the Minden Police Department, and the Bienville Parish Sheriff’s Office – Stephanie Hays, who was accused of stealing nearly $400,000 from residents of the Leslie Lakes Retirement Center in Arcadia, today pled guilty to money laundering and exploitation. “I commend my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for their hard work in investigating and prosecuting Ms. Hays,” said General Landry. “Today, she was convicted for scamming and robbing those entrusted in her care.”

“As I have often said, elderly fraud is an unlawful and immoral act that we will continue to investigate and prosecute,” continued General Landry. “I am grateful for the work by my office to get justice for the victims, including a Holocaust survivor, and the State.”

Earlier today, in open court, Hays pled guilty to one count of money laundering in...


MICHIGAN

May 02, 2018

**Schuette: Macomb Dentist Sentenced in Million Dollar Medicaid Fraud Scheme**

LANSING- Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that Dr. David Johnson, 51, was sentenced to 218 days in jail and 5 years probation for committing Medicaid fraud. Johnson is also required to pay $1.7 million in restitution. The scheme was operated through Livernois Dental in Detroit which Johnson owned and operated but has since sold.

“This man used the guise of dental treatment to intentionally steal from the taxpayers of this state who fund Medicaid,” said Schuette. Johnson was originally charged in May 2017 but was outside the country at the time and evaded arrest until the U.S. Marshals Service caught up with him in September 2017 in the
Dominican Republic. He has been in the Ingham County Jail since his return to Michigan. “Johnson may well have escaped justice but for the exemplary work of the U.S. Marshals Service,” Schuette added. “I would also like to thank Delta Dental for playing...

Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-467855--,00.html

NEVADA

May 29, 2018
Attorney General Laxalt Announces Conviction of Medicaid Provider Business Ordered to pay over $1 Million in Restitution

Las Vegas, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that We Care Behavioral Health Agency, LLC (We Care), based out of Las Vegas, was convicted for Medicaid fraud. The fraud was committed between April 2016 and August 2017.

Eighth Judicial District Court Judge Jennifer Togliatti sentenced the business on a gross misdemeanor charge of Intentional Failure to Maintain Adequate Records, and placed it on probation for three years. As part of the sentence, We Care was ordered to pay $1,080,082.49 in restitution.

“Today’s restitution of over $1 million dollars should send a message of deterrence to Medicaid providers engaging in fraud,” said Laxalt.

The investigation began after the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) received an allegation that We Care had allegedly not provided services to Medicaid recipients as billed to Nevada Medicaid. The investigation revealed that We Care intentionally failed to maintain accurate documentation, including progress notes concerning the services...


NEW YORK

May 21, 2018
Acting A.G. Underwood Announces Arrest And Indictment Of Licensed Nurse For Allegedly Stealing Over $550,000 From Brooklyn Hospital And Defrauding Medicaid

BROOKLYN – Acting Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced felony charges against Keisha Demas, 41, of Brooklyn, NY, for allegedly defrauding Medicaid and stealing over $550,000 from Interfaith Medical Center (“Interfaith”), a Brooklyn not-for-profit community-based hospital that recently came out of bankruptcy. The Attorney General’s office alleges that Demas was paid for a “no-show” job at the hospital for at least four years. During this period, Demas also allegedly received Medicaid benefits she was not entitled to and failed to remit her income taxes to the State of New York. In total, Demas allegedly defrauded Medicaid of over
$30,000 and underpaid the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance by nearly $40,000.
The defendant is charged with one count of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (a Class C felony), one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (a class D felony), one count of Forgery in the...


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**NORTH CAROLINA**

May 25, 2018

**Attorney General Josh Stein Announces Health Care Fraud Conviction**

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that Carlos Brown was sentenced in federal district court in the Middle District of North Carolina for illegal healthcare kickbacks and was sentenced to five years of probation with one year of home detention. Carlos Brown was ordered to pay $393,000 in restitution to the North Carolina Medicaid Program.

“Cheating Medicaid wastes tax dollars and can cause harm to patients in need of medical care,” said Attorney General Stein. “Many of these patients are among our most vulnerable citizens. My office will continue to investigate fraud and abuse by healthcare providers to protect North Carolina’s taxpayers.”

The conviction of Carlos Brown resolves allegations that Carlos Brown was hired by a behavioral health company, Nature’s Reflections, Inc., to recruit employees and clients who were eligible for Medicaid services between 2001 and 2013. Brown was paid a percentage of the amounts billed to Medicaid by...


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**PENNSYLVANIA**

May 25, 2018

**Cambria County Plastic Surgeon Pleads Guilty to $288K in Medicaid and Insurance Fraud**

HARRISBURG – Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced that a Johnstown plastic surgeon who routinely billed Medicaid and private insurers for cancer treatments – even when the growths were not cancerous – pleaded guilty today to two felonies. The surgeon bilked private insurers and the Medicaid program out of $288,974 through this continuing scheme.

Dr. Daniel R. Nevarre, 58, pleaded guilty today to Medicaid fraud and insurance fraud, both third-degree felonies. He waived his preliminary hearing and was sentenced by President Judge Norman Krumenacker today in Cambria County to six to 23 months of house arrest, followed by three years of probation. Nevarre was the owner and operator of Plastic Surgical Associates of Johnstown, which he sold in May 2017.
“When people commit Medicaid fraud, they’re stealing tax dollars from people who are in real need of health care services,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. “Insurance fraud is also a serious crime that...


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**PUERTO RICO**

May 21, 2018

Department of Justice signs administrative order to create the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (San Juan) - The Secretary of Justice, Wanda Vázquez Garced, informed that today she signed Administrative Order 2018-02 to create the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) in the Department of Justice.

In accordance with the bill filed yesterday before the Legislative Assembly by Governor Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on fraudulent claims to the programs, contracts and services of the Government of Puerto Rico, the Department of Justice today signed the administrative order that creates the mechanism for identify, investigate and process fraud and false claims to Medicaid, promoting the recovery of funds.

"The eradication of fraud is a priority on the agenda of this Government and the Department of Justice, as we are aware of the repercussions of fraud on health services and, above all, on the Medicaid Program. Certainly, we recognize that the availability of funds for such services depends on the government's ability to detect and prevent fraud, and to...


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**SOUTH CAROLINA**

May 25, 2018

Attorney General Alan Wilson announces recovery of $65,000 stolen from taxpayers by Medicaid fraud

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – May 25, 2018 – Attorney General Alan Wilson announces that his Medicaid Recipient Fraud division has recovered just under $65,000 in Medicaid benefits from a recipient in Aiken County who fraudulently got those benefits. This was not a conviction in court so we cannot name the recipient, due to privacy restrictions.

The recipient got the Medicaid benefits over several years and, after our investigation, agreed to repay $64,900.23, which the Attorney General’s Office received May 24th.

“This is a victory for taxpayers, who are happy to help their neighbors in need but certainly don’t want their tax money stolen through fraud,” Attorney General Wilson said.

The money will be returned to the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services,
which administers the Medicaid program, where it will be used by South Carolinians who are on Medicaid and have legitimate needs.

Last year, the Attorney General’s Medicaid Recipient Fraud division recovered...


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**TEXAS**

May 30, 2018

**AG Paxton Reaches $15.2 Million Settlement with Fraudulent Medicaid Providers**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced $15.2 million in combined Medicaid fraud settlements with a group of Dallas-Fort Worth area Medicaid rehabilitation therapy providers. Six individuals and four companies agreed to settle claims they violated the Texas Medicaid Fraud Prevention Act. Several of the providers are permanently barred from participating as Texas Medicaid providers.

The lawsuit alleged that rehabilitation therapy providers conspired to avoid repaying $2.7 million owed to Texas Medicaid for overpayments made to Advanced Therapy Services of Fort Worth and Advanced Therapy Services of Dallas for services provided to Texas Medicaid patients.

According to terms of the settlement, three people – David Scott Mitchell, Dr. Abraham Armani and Shahriar Raoufpour – are permanently banned from participating as a Texas Medicaid provider, and Progressive Pediatric Therapy LLC. Additionally, Cynthia L. Kidd and Joanie C. Powell are prohibited from owning, managing or otherwise controlling any entity that provides services to Texas...


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**Consumer Advocacy**

**ALABAMA**

May 11, 2018

**AG STEVE MARSHALL JOINS STATE HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION AND HOME BUILDERS LICENSURE BOARD TO PROMOTE SAFE CONSUMER PRACTICES FOR NATIONAL REMODELING MONTH**

(MONTGOMERY) -- Attorney General Steve Marshall is joining with the Home Builders Association of Alabama (HBAA) and the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board to promote safe consumer practices in observance of May as National Remodeling Month. Whether remodeling projects are undertaken for desired home improvements or to repair damage caused by storms or other crises, it is important to make careful decisions and choose reputable
and qualified contractors. “We want consumers to have information and resources that will help their remodeling projects have a successful and happy outcome,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Unfortunately, problems with home repairs continue to be among the top complaints received by my consumer protection staff. Through our partnership with the Home Builders Association and the Home Builders Licensure Board, we want to help consumers recognize warning signs, to know the steps to find reliable and responsible workers, and to remind scammers that home repair fraud...

- Original Press Release: https://ago.alabama.gov/News#7895

ARKANSAS

May 11, 2018

Rutledge Applauds President Trump’s Plan to Lower Prescription Drug Prices

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge applauds President Trump’s plan to lower prescription drug prices. The President announced a plan today to require Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) to act in the best interest of patients and prohibits gag rules that prevent pharmacists from discussing contract terms and prices, among other actions. “I am proud to see President Trump take action and combat the tremendous strain that prescription drug prices place on patients,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The actions of PBMs and so-called gag rules prevent patients from receiving the best care and drug prices, harming all Arkansans. I welcome the Administration to the fight against these nefarious activities and look forward to finding a resolution that will benefit all Arkansans and Americans.”

Earlier this year, Attorney General Rutledge began reviewing reports that CVS Caremark drastically reduced its reimbursement rate for pharmacies in the Arkansas Health Insurance Marketplace. Local pharmacists are...


May 10, 2018

Rutledge Partners with FTC on Consumer Protection Webinar

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced an upcoming free consumer protection webinar, presented by the Attorney General’s Office and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) on Thursday, May 17 at 10:00 a.m. The webinar will include information on fighting consumer fraud and identity theft in Arkansas and will feature information from the FTC, the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division, the Better Business Bureau and others. “This partnership is a wonderful opportunity for Arkansans to learn how to protect themselves from common scams and identity theft,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “My staff travels the
State educating Arkansans about how they can spot scams. This webinar is just one more way to reach consumers across the State and I am proud to partner with the FTC on providing this free resource.”
Consumers will have the opportunity to learn more about the top scams reported in Arkansas, tips for identifying the latest...


May 08, 2018
Rutledge Praises Damages Ruling for Victims of Do Not Call Registry Violation
LITTLE ROCK - Some Arkansans could be eligible for more than $1,200 from Dish Network. In a ruling earlier this year, a federal judge in North Carolina found Dish liable for multiple violations of the Do Not Call Registry, and the judge has ordered the company to pay $1,200 to consumers for each violation.
“Dish knowingly violated the Do Not Call Registry and have now been ordered to pay,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Companies need to be held responsible for breaking the law, and I am pleased the judge has sided with consumers.”
Attorneys could soon begin reaching out to consumers directly, and Arkansans should know that this is not a scam. Consumers can search for their phone number here to check eligibility for payment from Dish. If eligible, Arkansans must file a claim with the company by June 18.


May 03, 2018
Rutledge Urges Utility Companies to Pass Savings to Ratepayers
LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today filed comments with the Arkansas Public Service Commission encouraging utility companies to pass along their savings from President Donald J. Trump’s corporate tax rate reduction to their consumers. Some utilities are over collecting money from consumers by using rates set to recover taxes at the previous, higher rate – a move that wrongly takes hard-earned money away from Arkansas consumers.
“President Trump’s tax rate reduction was intended to put more money back into the pockets of Americans, but some utility companies are keeping the profits and benefits of the tax cuts for themselves,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “This behavior goes against the very spirit of the historic tax bill and cannot continue. It is time for the companies to pass savings on to Arkansas consumers.”
A portion of the money collected from ratepayers for utility company taxes is no longer needed because of...

Attorney General Becerra Issues Statement in Response to U.S. Department of Justice’s Approval of Bayer Acquisition

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra issued the following statement on the U.S. Department of Justice’s approval of the Bayer-Monsanto merger:

“The California Department of Justice (Cal DOJ) will carefully examine the settlement announced today by the U.S. Department of Justice allowing two massive agricultural companies, Bayer and Monsanto, to merge. Coming on the heels of the Dow/Dupont and ChemChina/Syngenta mergers, this deal could further suffocate competition in the agricultural sector. The cumulative impact of unchecked industry consolidation hurts farmers, consumers, and workers in California and around the country. Our state is the breadbasket for America and the world. Cal DOJ will do whatever is necessary to protect our people and our interests.”


Attorney General Becerra Opposes Trump-Pence Rule that Restricts Women's Health and Requests Meeting

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today submitted a letter to the federal government opposing the proposed regulation Compliance with Statutory Program Integrity Requirements, released on May 20, 2018, and requesting a meeting with the Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to share California’s concerns. The regulation would severely change and undermine the Title X family planning program.

“The Trump-Pence Administration is seeking to end access to critical, constitutionally-protected reproductive healthcare. California has made great strides in advancing women’s healthcare and rights. We are not looking to go backwards,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Medical care and informed medical decisions are matters between a woman and her doctor, not politicians and bureaucrats.”

“This ruling is an outright assault on the fundamental rights and freedoms of women across America. It will prevent doctors, nurses and healthcare providers from doing their jobs and result in...

May 22, 2018

Attorney General Becerra Slams Vote by House of Representatives to Repeal Parts of Dodd-Frank Act

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement in response to the 258-159 vote by the U.S. House of Representatives to repeal parts of the Dodd-Frank Act. The measure was passed by the U.S. Senate in March:

“Those Members of Congress who just voted to repeal parts of the Dodd-Frank Act have lots of explaining to do to the American people. During the Great Recession, 8.7 million individuals lost their jobs and trillions of their hard-earned dollars vanished. This was not a mere coincidence; it was the result of reckless speculation and unabashed greed. As a Member of Congress, I proudly worked on and voted for the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010 because I knew we needed to put in place commonsense protections for consumers.

“At the California Department of Justice, we will continue doing what is necessary to stand up for our families. And we hope that Washington...


May 18, 2018

Attorney General Becerra: Trump Administration’s Move to Restrict Women’s Access to Reproductive Healthcare “Reckless”

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement following the federal government’s announcement that it is imposing new rules that would limit access to reproductive healthcare for women. The proposed rule would prohibit healthcare providers like Planned Parenthood from providing comprehensive reproductive healthcare in the Title X program. More than four million Americans rely on Title X for birth control, cancer screenings, and other critical preventive care, including one million patients in California.

“The Trump-Pence Administration is yet again attempting to interfere in a woman’s healthcare decisions by restricting what doctors can say to their patients. Medical care is a matter between a woman and her doctor, not the President or the Vice President,” said Attorney General Becerra. “This proposed rule is reckless and threatens women’s access to critical healthcare. Millions of women rely on Title X, and even more rely on Planned Parenthood, to access affordable...


May 09, 2018

Attorney General Becerra Alerts California Companies of Malware Attack Impacting Thousands of Computer Users

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, working with the California
Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), uncovered more than two thousand computers and other electronic devices infected by malicious software (malware). Attorney General Becerra announced today that the California Department of Justice sent letters to communication service providers encouraging companies to inform customers with identified Internet Protocol (IP) addresses that their devices may contain the malware. The finding stems from a cyberattack that occurred in March 2018. Malware attacks involve the installation of unwelcome software without the user’s consent. The impacted devices receive and obey commands from an outside common source.

“We know that once a computer is infected with malware, the malware operators virtually own that device and can do most anything they want. That’s why it is critical that we continue to identify cybercrimes and take action against those who deploy malware,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Today...


May 09, 2018
Attorney General Becerra: Trump Administration Sides with For-Profit College Industry Over Students in Eliminating Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Office Dedicated to Protecting Students
SACRAMENTO — California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement in response to the decision by Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Acting Director Mick Mulvaney to eliminate the CFPB office dedicated to protecting students:

“Mick Mulvaney, whose very position as Acting Director is legally suspect, has chosen to abandon the CFPB’s office established to oversee college financial aid and lending practices to the sheer delight of predatory for-profit colleges, unscrupulous education lenders and loan servicers, and abusive debt collectors. The Trump Administration is inviting the fox to take charge of the henhouse. Aspiring college students and their parents can smell this raw deal from a mile away.

“Americans who have attended institutions of higher education today face a $1.5 trillion mountain of student loan debt — more than what Americans owe in credit card debt. The biggest targets of the predatory, for-profit education industry are young military servicemembers and first-time...


FLORIDA
May 26, 2018
Attorney General Bondi Activates Price Gouging Hotline
TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today activated Florida’s price gouging hotline
for consumers statewide. The opening of the hotline comes as Governor Rick Scott declares a state of emergency in 67 counties and warns of heavy rain and flooding as we continue to monitor Subtropical Storm Alberto. Florida’s price gouging law only applies within the area of the declared state of emergency, which in this case is all Florida counties. State law prohibits extreme increases in the price of essential commodities, such as food, water, hotels, ice, gasoline, lumber and equipment, needed as a direct result of an officially declared emergency. Anyone who suspects price gouging during this declared state of emergency should report it to the Attorney General’s Office by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM. Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation and up to a total of $25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single...

➢ Original Press Release:

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GEORGIA

May 24, 2018
**Consumer Alert: Beware of Door-to-Door Home Alarm System Scams**

ATLANTA, GA - As we welcome the warmer weather, some unwelcome visitors may come a-knocking. During spring and summer many home alarm system companies hire college students and others to go door-to-door making unsolicited sales calls. The commissions can be lucrative, which prompts some people to say whatever it takes to try to make a sale. The ensuing scams and deceptive practices can take several forms:

The sales agent may tell you that the equipment is “free,” and then pressure you into signing an expensive monitoring contract after the equipment is installed.

The sales reps may use high-pressure sales tactics, telling you that to take advantage of a special, limited-time offer you must act immediately. They may even use scare tactics, for example, claiming there have been a rash of burglaries in your neighborhood and that they were referred by police living nearby.

Unscrupulous sales reps may pose as employees of...


May 01, 2018
**Carr Releases Georgia Consumer Protection Guide for Older Adults**

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced the release of a brand new resource for Georgians: The Georgia Consumer Protection Guide for Older Adults. The release of the guide coincides with Governor Deal’s proclamation that May is Older Americans Month in Georgia. Read the proclamation here.

“Supporting and protecting our aging community is an essential part of our consumer
protection mission,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “We created this comprehensive guide to empower our older adults, their families and caregivers with information to make wise decisions about their money, safety and well-being.”
Older adults are often targeted by scammers who view them as particularly vulnerable to fraudulent and deceptive schemes. They also face unique challenges that come with aging, which are often difficult to navigate. The Georgia Consumer Protection Guide for Older Adults includes an array of topics of importance to seniors, including scams, identity theft, credit and debt, reverse...


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**ILLINOIS**

May 25, 2018

**MADIGAN URGES LAWMAKERS TO STRENGTHEN OVERSIGHT OF ALTERNATIVE RETAIL ENERGY SUPPLIERS, INCREASE RATE TRANSPARENCY & PREVENT PUBLIC ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUNDS FROM BEING SIPHONED OFF TO PAD CORPORATE PROFITS**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged the General Assembly to support legislation that will increase oversight of alternative retail electric and gas suppliers (ARES and ARGs), which claim to offer cheaper energy rates than traditional utility companies but are almost always far more expensive.

Madigan initiated Senate Bill 1531, sponsored by Rep. Greg Harris and Sen. Kimberly Lightford, to guard against aggressive and misleading marketing and sales practices in the ARES and ARGs industries. These suppliers frequently target older citizens, low-income customers, and individuals for whom English is a second language. A vast majority of consumers who enroll with these suppliers end up paying more for their energy than customers who receive electricity or gas from traditional utilities. The legislation is scheduled for a hearing by the House Executive Committee in the next few days.

“Public utilities’ customers in Illinois who switch to an alternative energy supplier are virtually guaranteed...


May 24, 2018

**MADIGAN APPLAUDS SUPPORT FOR BILL TO PREVENT STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS FROM LOSING PROFESSIONAL LICENSES**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the Illinois House for passing legislation that would prevent a student loan borrower’s professional license from being suspended if they are behind on their payments.

Madigan initiated Senate Bill 2439, the Career Preservation and Student Loan Repayment Act,
to prevent the state from suspending or terminating professional licenses of student loan borrowers who are behind on their monthly payments. SB 2439, which is sponsored by Rep. Carol Ammons, passed the House with strong bipartisan support and will now be sent to the governor.
"There are over 44 million Americans who in total have over $1.4 trillion in outstanding student loan debt," Madigan said. "We should have policies that allow them to support themselves and repay their loans. Taking away debtors' licenses punishes and prevents them from earning enough to live and make their loan payments. It is nonsensical."
"Illinois' current practice of suspending the professional...

KANSAS

May 31, 2018

Consumer Alert: Storm damage could attract illegal contractors

TOPEKA – (May 31, 2018) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt is urging Barton County residents to use caution to avoid scams by transient contractors following this week’s hailstorm.

“After storm damage, our instinct is to clean up and make repairs as quickly as possible,” Schmidt said. “When considering roofing work on a home or business, it is important that consumers make sure their roofing contractor is properly registered before signing any contract or having any work done. Consumers should request a copy of their roofer’s registration certificate and then should check our consumer protection website to confirm that the registration remains active.”

Staff from the attorney general’s Roofing Registration Unit have been in contact with local officials to assist in responding to contractors and consumers.

The requirement to register with the attorney general’s office is in addition to any other local requirements that may be imposed by cities or counties. The online...

May 08, 2018

Kansans safely dispose of nearly 30 tons of personal documents during National Consumer Protection Week


“The outstanding turnout at our free document destruction events shows that Kansans recognize the importance of keeping their personal information secure,” Schmidt said. “The
documents dropped off have now been safely destroyed and are out of the reach of identity thieves."
More than 1,200 Kansans dropped off 59,990 pounds of documents at 10 locations across the state.
The document destruction program was made possible through partnerships with Underground Vaults and Storage, Iron Mountain, Westar Energy and the Better Business Bureau.
Kansas consumers can find more information about protecting themselves from identity theft and other scams at www.InYourCornerKansas.org.


May 03, 2018
Consumer Alert: Storm damage could attract illegal contractors
TOPEKA – (May 3, 2018) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt is urging Kansas residents to use caution to avoid scams by transient contractors following this week’s severe weather across the state.
“After storm damage, our instinct is to clean up and make repairs as quickly as possible,” Schmidt said. “When considering roofing work on a home or business, it is important that consumers make sure their roofing contractor is properly registered before signing any contract or having any work done. Consumers should request a copy of their roofer’s registration certificate and then should check our consumer protection website to confirm that the registration remains active.”
Staff from the attorney general’s Roofing Registration Unit have been in contact with many local officials affected by this week’s storms to assist in responding to contractors and consumers.
The requirement to register with the attorney general’s office is in addition to any other local requirements...


LOUISIANA
May 25, 2018
Protect Yourself This Hurricane Season
BATON ROUGE, LA – With a weather system heading into the Gulf of Mexico and June 1 marking the start of the 2018 Atlantic Hurricane Season, Attorney General Jeff Landry is reminding Louisiana citizens that scams often follow natural disasters.
“Unfortunately, our State knows all too well the damage that can be caused by natural disasters...
and the con artists trying to profit off of them,” said General Landry. “So I am encouraging the
people of our State to get informed on signs of potential scams and ways to avoid becoming
victims of them.”
General Landry urges consumers to consider the following to help avoid common hurricane-
related scams:
IDENTITY THEFT: Keep your personal files safe by putting them in a secure, waterproof location
such as a safe deposit box or home safe.
HOME REPAIR SCAMS: Confirm potential contractors’ credentials with the Louisiana State
Licensing Board for Contractors before signing contracts and paying down payments.

May 11, 2018
Attorney General Jeff Landry Encourages Seniors to Scam-Proof Their Lives
BATON ROUGE, LA – May is recognized nationally as Older Americans Month, and Louisiana
Attorney General Jeff Landry is reminding seniors that education is the best line of defense
against fraud.
“Research shows that Americans aged 65 and older are the prime targets of scams and that
they receive more junk mail and telephone solicitations than any other age group,” said
General Landry. “So my office and I will continue to do all we can to educate seniors on how to
best recognize scams and con artists to avoid becoming fraud victims.”
General Landry’s Office offers a special consumer publication on elder fraud prevention which
contains information on how to avoid telemarketing, mortgage, contractor, charity, and other
types of frauds commonly perpetrated on senior citizens. Some of the many tips for seniors are
as follows:
• Never give out a Social Security number, credit card number, or bank account information
over the phone...

May 07, 2018
Be Smart with Your Smart Phone is a Must Read before Summer Recess
BATON ROUGE, LA – With schools set to release for break soon – Attorney General Jeff Landry
is encouraging Louisiana parents, guardians, and students to add the “Be Smart with Your Smart
Phone” booklet to their summer reading lists.
“While smart phones provide easy outlets to connect and share with others; if used incorrectly,
they can present big problems,” said General Landry. “So with summer break fast approaching
and the time being spent on these devices likely increasing, I hope all Louisianans take the time
to learn ways to be smart with their smart phones.”
In a video released today, General Landry highlights some of the many public safety issues
related to smart phones: including – but not limited to – texting while driving, cyber bullying,
and talking to child predators. And he called on all Louisiana residents to read the “Be Smart with Your Smart Phone” booklet.
“From oversharing to embarrassing situations...


MARYLAND

May 22, 2018
Consumer Alert: LifeBridge Health Reports Data Breach
BALTIMORE, MD (May 22, 2018) – Recent reports of massive data breaches highlight the need for all businesses and, in particular those that hold our health records, to be vigilant about protecting our personal information and health records that are increasingly being targeted by hackers.
Most recently, LifeBridge Health and LifeBridge Potomac Professionals reported discovery of breach of the server hosting patient registration, billing information, and electronic health records, and social security numbers. This data breach likely affects more than 500,000 Marylanders. LifeBridge has posted an online statement about the breach. http://www.lifebridgehealth.org/main/SecurityIncident.aspx
Additionally, LifeBridge has established a dedicated call center that potentially affected patients may contact with questions. Consumers concerned that they may be impacted by the data breach can reach the call center at 855-789-0909.
The Office of Attorney General’s Identity Theft Unit offers guidance and assistance to Marylanders about how to protect yourself against identity theft and what to...


MICHIGAN

May 30, 2018
Schuette Reminds Residents about June Consumer Education Community Programs
LANSING – Attorney General Bill Schuette is encouraging Michigan residents to learn more about the consumer education programs offered through his office in the month of June. The Department of Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division offers a variety of programs throughout each month aimed to keep Michigan consumers safe and up-to-date on the latest scams. Schuette encourages residents to learn more and attend the free programs.
JUNE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:
Home Repair and Improvement - Learn the telltale signs of home repair scams, unscrupulous contractors, and how to navigate the home improvement process.
Identity Theft - Learn about the signs of identity theft, how to protect your personal information online and off, and what to do if you become a victim of identity theft.
May 15, 2018

After Spring Flood Warnings, Schuette Reminds Residents to be on the Lookout for Flood Damaged Vehicles When Making A Car Purchase

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today cautioned Michigan drivers searching for a new vehicle to be on the lookout for flood damaged cars, trucks and SUVs. Recent flood warnings due to heavy rains means there is a greater chance vehicles could have suffered flood damage. Many of which will end up on the used car market. Vehicles with flood damage can appear for sale on the internet or at car lots far away from the storm area, without any mention of flood damage or obvious signs of damage.

“It is always important to do research before making a car purchase including looking for or asking about past flood damage,” said Schuette. “Most auto retailers would never sell a damaged vehicle, but unfortunately there are crooked sellers who have no problem taking advantage of trusting and hard-working individuals in order to make money.”

Water can damage vital parts of a car...

May 09, 2018

Schuette Reminds Residents about May Consumer Education Programs

LANSING- Attorney General Bill Schuette is encouraging Michigan residents to learn more about the consumer education programs offered through his office in the month of May. The Department of Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division offers a variety of programs throughout the month aimed to keep Michigan consumers safe and up-to-date on the latest scams.

“I’m proud of the work my Consumer Protection team does to make these programs available each month,” said Schuette. “Michigan is a safer place and residents are more engaged, aware, and able to defend themselves in these situations because of these Consumer Education programs.”

The May programs include:

Home Repair & Improvement - Learn the telltale signs of home repair scams, unscrupulous contractors, and how to navigate the home improvement process.

Phone, Mail, & e-Scams - Learn the telltale signs of scams prevalent in phone calls, mail, email, and texts, along with steps to take to minimize your...
MISSISSIPPI  
May 02, 2018  
AG Hood Alerts Consumers About Computer Scams  
A pop-up alert on your computer that appears to be a technical support message could be an effort to steal your personal information, warned Attorney General Jim Hood. The Consumer Protection Division in the Attorney General’s Office has seen a recent increase in these types of scams, where tech support scammers use pop-ups that resemble security alerts from Microsoft, Apple, or other companies. The alerts warn that the user’s computer is hacked or infected with viruses. Some pop-ups even feature a countdown clock, supposedly showing the time remaining before the hard drive will be fried—unless the consumer calls a toll-free number supposedly affiliated with one of those big-name companies. Do not call that number—instead, shut your computer down immediately. When a person calls that number, scammers may pose as a security, customer, or technical support representative offering to resolve such issues as a compromised email or bank account, a virus on a…


NEBRASKA  
May 16, 2018  
Stopping Unwanted Robocalls  
Robocalls are an ongoing topic of conversation in Nebraska, leaving consumers wondering what they can do to stop this annoyance. Stopping illegal robocalls has been deemed a top consumer protection priority by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). Despite protections such as the Do Not Call Registry, unwanted calls have been a top source of complaints to the FCC for years. Many of these calls have “spoofed” or misleading caller ID information. When committed with the intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongly obtain anything of value, “spoofing” is illegal under the Truth in Caller ID Act. Those who ignore this law can face penalties of up to $10,000 for each violation. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), passed by Congress in 1991, also restricts the making of unwanted calls including telemarketing and robocalls. The FCC website contains resources and good information for consumers to utilize as a means of stopping unwanted calls,…

NEVADA

May 31, 2018

Attorney General Laxalt Partners with Federal Trade Commission to Educate Consumers on Fraud, ID Theft

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that his office is partnering with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for a free webinar available to the public. The webinar, titled Fighting Consumer Fraud and Identity Theft in Nevada, begins at 11 a.m. on June 6th.

The webinar will be focused on the top scams reported throughout the State of Nevada, and the Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection and the FTC will partner together to offer tips on how to avoid being scammed and protect yourself from frauds. Topics included in the free webinar will be focused on identify theft, recovering from data breaches, IRS imposter calls, tech support scams, sweepstakes and grant scams, the grandparents scam, charity scams, debt scams, opportunity scams, and small business scams.

“Education is the key to prevention,” said Laxalt, “And we are proud to work with our federal partners to help protect...


NEW JERSEY

May 24, 2018

Proposed Regulation –Division of Consumer Affairs

NEWARK – The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs has proposed amendments to regulations regarding towing of motor vehicles.

N.J.S.A. 56:13-13 prohibits a person from towing a motor vehicle from private property unless he or she satisfies certain conditions. P.L.2017, c.321 exempts tows authorized by law enforcement officers from the prohibitions in N.J.S.A. 56:13-13. N.J.S.A. 56:13-16 requires a towing company to release a motor vehicle to its owner or operator when the vehicle has been hooked or lifted but has not yet been removed from the property. P.L. 2017, c. 321 exempts tows authorized by law enforcement officers from these release requirements. The proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 13:45A-31.6 and 31.8 effectuate P.L. 2017, c. 321.

The proposed amendments, and information on how to submit a comment by July 6, 2018, can be viewed here.

AG Grewal to U.S. Education Secretary:
New Jersey Will Investigate For-Profit Colleges if Feds Won’t

TRENTON – Voicing concern over an apparent decline in federal efforts to combat fraud committed by for-profit educational institutions, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal has written the U.S. Department of Education offering to take over any investigation the federal agency shuts down prematurely.

In a letter sent Thursday to U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, the Attorney General references recent reports that the Department of Education has “effectively killed” investigations into possibly fraudulent activities at several large for-profit colleges, and is restricting communications between its staff and state Attorneys General with regard to those investigations.

Attorney General Grewal’s letter asserts that “students and taxpayers alike are harmed when educational institutions fail to deliver what they advertise,” and expresses disappointment that a once-productive working relationship between federal education officials and state Attorneys General appears to be dissolving. …


May 09, 2018

Ocean County Man Convicted at Trial of Using His Securities Trading Company to Steal Over $400,000 from Investors

TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced that an Ocean County man was convicted at trial of stealing over $400,000 from investors by depositing their funds into a securities trading company he formed, but then using the funds for his own expenses and personal day trading activity.

Jeffrey D. Griffin, Jr., 43, of Toms River, N.J., was convicted late yesterday afternoon, May 8, by a Passaic County jury of all counts in a five-count indictment charging him with theft by deception, misapplication of entrusted property, two counts of violation of New Jersey’s Uniform Securities Act, and money laundering, all in the second degree. The verdict followed a trial before Superior Court Judge Joseph Portelli in Paterson.

Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to $150,000, and the money laundering charge carries an additional anti-money laundering profiteering penalty of up to...


May 07, 2018

AG Grewal Announces Creation of New Enforcement Unit to Protect Data Privacy of New Jersey’s Residents

TRENTON – Responding to growing threats to the online privacy of New Jersey’s residents, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced plans today to create a new civil enforcement
The new DPC Section will be housed within the Division of Law’s Affirmative Civil Enforcement Practice Group. The Section will be staffed by Division of Law attorneys whose specific charge will be to enforce laws that protect New Jersey residents’ data privacy and cybersecurity by bringing affirmative civil actions against violators. Another role of the Section will be to provide legal advice to the State’s Executive Branch agencies on compliance with cyber-related state and federal laws and standards.

“The Attorney General’s Office has long played a role in protecting our residents from cyber threats, but given recent developments, we realized that we needed to double down on those efforts,” said Attorney...


May 07, 2018
**AG Grewal, State’s Securities Regulator to Congress: Federal Bill Would Weaken State Securities Fraud Enforcement**

TRENTON —Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and Bureau of Securities Chief Christopher W. Gerold are urging key members of Congress to oppose a federal bill that, according to the State’s top law enforcement official and top securities regulator, will severely weaken state-level efforts to protect investors from securities fraud.

In a letter today to the leadership of the House Committee on Financial Services and the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Attorney General Grewal and Securities Chief Gerold caution that the federal Securities Fraud Act of 2018 (H.R. 5037) will restrict New Jersey’s ability to enforce its anti-fraud laws and recover investors’ funds.

Among other concerns, the letter notes that, if passed, the bill would prevent state securities regulators from bringing enforcement actions with respect to issuers of securities listed on an exchange (i.e., the New York Stock Exchange, NASDAQ). In the past, such a bill would have rendered state regulators unable to pursue...


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**NEW MEXICO**

May 17, 2018
**SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns of New Messenger App Scam**

Albuquerque, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert because New Mexicans who use “messenger” services or “apps” to communicate with friends are facing a new criminal hacking scheme. The victim believes he or she is communicating via a messenger service with a friend. Unfortunately, the other end of the message chain is being answered by an imposter who has hacked the actual friend’s messenger service—not the friend at all.
“Never pay anyone who demands payment via gift card because the use of non-standard banking devices is a sure sign you are dealing with a scammer,” said Attorney General Balderas. “Secondly, never disclose your personal information to someone who initiated the contact electronically with you.”

A woman called the Office of the Attorney General yesterday to report that a "friend" on the messenger app told her about a new Health and Human Services program being offered to persons...


May 16, 2018

Comcast’s Internet Essentials Program, Attorney General Hector Balderas, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller, Teeniors, and Adelante Join Forces to Promote Internet Safety and Cybersecurity for Seniors, Parents and Children

ALBUQUERQUE, May 16, 2018 — Today, David L. Cohen, Comcast Corporation’s Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer; New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas; and Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller announced a new Internet Essentials partnership to educate seniors, parents, and children across New Mexico about some of the most serious challenges they may face online.

This innovative, multi-dimensional effort will combine public service announcements, free in-person training programs, and free educational resources including videos, brochures, and booklets that will also be made available online.

“As New Mexico’s chief law enforcement, I am urging New Mexicans to take advantage of these free resources to help protect themselves against online threats and scams," said Attorney General Hector Balderas. "New Mexicans, especially our senior citizens, are far too often victims of financial scams so I am thankful to Comcast, the City of Albuquerque, Teeniors and Adelante for this partnership to protect New Mexico children...


May 02, 2018

Read the Fine Print: AG Balderas Announces Free Financial Literacy Classes around New Mexico

Española, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced a series of financial literacy trainings to be held throughout the state as part of the settlement with Visa and MasterCard, the United States' two largest payment card networks, over a lawsuit brought by the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General alleging excessive fees charged during credit and debit card transactions. The Read the Fine Print financial literacy trainings are free and open to the public.
"I'm committed to protecting New Mexico consumers and that means ensuring they have access to the training and educational tools necessary to become informed consumers," said Attorney General Balderas. “New Mexico families face many financial dangers, scams, and predatory business practices, so it’s critical our families take advantage of free trainings like our Read the Fine Print financial literacy trainings.”

The Read the Fine Print financial literacy trainings will be focused on financial literacy, including...


NEW YORK
May 31, 2018

NEW YORK – To mark the end of Mental Health Month, Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today released a report detailing the work of the office’s Health Care Bureau in enforcing state and federal mental health parity laws over the past five years — which have helped transform the industry and resulted in over $2 million in restitution to consumers. The report, “Mental Health Parity: Enforcement by the New York State Office of the Attorney General,” summarizes the results to date of the Attorney General’s Office’s industry-wide initiative to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to behavioral health services, such as substance abuse treatment — including the enforcement of eight national settlement agreements with seven health plans.

“Access to mental health services, including substance abuse treatment, is critical to New Yorkers’ health and wellbeing,” said Attorney General Underwood. “Our office is committed to enforcing mental health parity laws to increase...


May 10, 2018
Statement By Acting A.G. Underwood On Net Neutrality Rollback

Today, the FCC announced that the rollback of net neutrality will officially take effect on June 11th. Acting New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood released the following statement: “A free and open internet is critical to New York, and to our democracy. The repeal of net neutrality would allow internet service providers to put their profits before the consumers they serve and control what we see, do, and say online.

This office has proudly led the suit to block this illegal rollback of net neutrality – and we
certainly won’t stop now. We look forward to making our case in court.”
In February, New York – leading a coalition of 23 Attorneys General – filed suit to block the illegal rollback of net neutrality.


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**NORTH CAROLINA**

May 30, 2018

**North Carolina Price Gouging Law in Effect in Western North Carolina**

(RALEIGH) The price gouging law that protects consumers from scammers is now in effect in Western North Carolina after Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency for the region after heavy rains, mudslides, and evacuations. Attorney General Josh Stein notified businesses and consumers today to be on the lookout for any issues.

“My office is here to protect North Carolinians from scams and frauds,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “That is true all the time – but especially during severe weather. It is against the law to charge an excessive price during a state of emergency. If you see a business taking advantage of this storm, please let my office know so we can hold them accountable.”

North Carolina has a strong statute against price gouging – charging too much during a time of crisis – that is tied directly to a declaration of a state of emergency. When...


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**OHIO**

May 21, 2018

**Constitutional Amendment Petition Resubmission Related to Short-Term Loans Certified**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—The Ohio Attorney General’s Office today certified a resubmitted petition for a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution which would establish additional regulations for short-term loans.

On May 11, 2018, the Ohio Attorney General’s Office received a written petition to amend the Ohio Constitution, entitled "Short-Term Loan Consumer Protection Amendment" from legal counsel for the petitioning committee. The initial submission was rejected on March 9, 2018, due to deficiencies in the petition summary. The resubmitted petition was certified today as containing both the necessary 1,000 valid signatures from registered Ohio voters and a “fair and truthful” summary of the proposed amendment.

“Without passing upon the advisability of the approval or rejection of the measure to be referred, but pursuant to the duties imposed upon the Attorney General’s Office [...] I hereby certify that the summary is a fair and truthful statement of the proposed law,” Ohio Attorney
May 17, 2018

Attorney General DeWine Statement on Additional Opioid Litigation

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine issued the following statement after the states of New York and Utah announced their intent to file separate lawsuits against opioid manufacturers:

“Ohio was the first major state to sue the drug manufacturers, and I am delighted that New York and Utah have announced they will file litigation against opioid manufacturers. We are gaining momentum day-by-day. With more than two dozen states willing to hold irresponsible manufacturers accountable for their direct roles in deceiving Americans about the dangers of prescription opioids, it is time for drug companies to take responsibility. The devastating impact of opioid addiction has wreaked havoc on too many communities and torn too many families apart. Manufacturers can no longer ignore their role in fueling the opioid epidemic.”

May 16, 2018

Attorney General DeWine Statement on New Opioid Litigation Filed in Numerous States

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine issued the following statement after the states of Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas each filed separate state litigation against opioid manufacturers, including Purdue Pharma:

"I am delighted that what Ohio started almost a year ago has grown to 23 states, as well as Puerto Rico. I made sure Ohio was out in front on this issue as the first major state to file such litigation. Opioid manufacturers should be held accountable for their direct roles in our country's opioid epidemic and for deliberately misleading Americans about the dangers of prescription opioids. As I said when I announced my lawsuit, any chance at a settlement to provide immediate relief would require a large number of states following Ohio's lead and filing litigation. With six more states having just filed, our coalition is growing and cannot be ignored by these drug companies."

May 16, 2018

Attorney General DeWine Statement on Senate Passage of Cybersecurity Bill

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today released the following statement regarding the Senate passage of Senate Bill 220, the Data Protection Act sponsored by State Senators Bob Hackett (R-London) and Kevin Bacon (R-Westerville):
“This commonsense legislation would be a win-win for both Ohio business owners and Ohio consumers,” said Attorney General DeWine. “Encouraging businesses to take the appropriate steps to protect their customers’ personal information could avoid costly data breaches for companies and give customers peace of mind that their personal information is protected.”

The Data Protection Act is the first piece of legislation introduced as a result of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine’s CyberOhio Initiative. The measure would encourage businesses to voluntarily adopt strong cybersecurity controls to protect consumer data. The legislation identifies ten different industry-recognized cybersecurity frameworks on which businesses can base their security programs.

Launched in September 2016, the goal of CyberOhio is to help foster a legal,

May 04, 2018
Attorney General DeWine Statement on Discovery Tours

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today issued the following statement on Discovery Tours, a tour company that has generated more than 170 complaints since Wednesday:

“Like many schools and families, we are very concerned about what’s happening with Discovery Tours and we want answers. As we gather information, I want Ohioans to know that this is a priority for my office, and we will do everything we can to assist. We want to hear from Ohioans who have used this company.”

Between late Wednesday evening and Friday morning, the Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section received more than 170 complaints about Discovery Tours, primarily from parents who said they were concerned about canceled school trips after they had paid the company hundreds of dollars.

Attorney General DeWine’s Consumer Protection Section is reaching out to potentially affected school districts and gathering information from consumers. Affected consumers are encouraged to file a complaint with...

OKLAHOMA

May 23, 2018
Attorney General Hunter Tours Western Oklahoma Fire Damaged Areas, Cautions Local Residents of Potential Scams

WOODWARD – Attorney General Mike Hunter on Tuesday joined Oklahoma Cattlemen’s Association Executive Vice President Michael Kelsey for a tour of Western Oklahoma farms and ranches damaged by the recent wildfires.
While meeting with residents, Attorney General Hunter handed out disaster scam packets from his office and cautioned individuals to be wary of potential scams and fly-by-night companies that could be targeting the area.

“Meeting with those affected and seeing the devastation firsthand puts this heartbreaking tragedy into perspective,” Attorney General Hunter said. “This community has suffered greatly. Some lost loved ones, homes, livestock, their livelihoods and much more. As public officials during this time of recovery, it is our job to assure them that we stand by, ready to assist by any means necessary.

“After a disaster, we unfortunately see predators who want to take advantage of these victims in their vulnerable state. That is why it is important for my office...


May 14, 2018
Attorney General Hunter Asks for Customer Protection Guarantees if PSO Wind Catcher Project is Preapproved

OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Mike Hunter today filed a list of recommended guaranteed ratepayer protections for customers if the PSO Wind Catcher Project is granted preapproval by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC).

The recommendations were supported in coordination with the OCC’s public utility division. In addition to the recommendations, the filing asks Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) to enter into a voluntary agreement with affected landowners along the project’s route to outline a process for dispute resolution.

Attorney General Hunter said although he still believes the project should not be preapproved, he wants to guarantee Oklahomans are protected if the OCC approves it.

“We want to ensure the potential burden that comes with this project is not placed on the backs of hardworking Oklahomans,” Attorney General Hunter said. “Once adopted, our recommendations will add necessary provisions to safeguard customers by holding them harmless from exorbitant fees and will give money back to...


OREGON

May 31, 2018
Attorney General Rosenblum Issues Price Gouging Consumer Alert Following State of Emergency in Marion and Polk Counties

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today issued a consumer alert following Governor Brown’s declaration of a state of emergency for contaminated drinking water in Marion and Polk Counties.
“Our State’s price gouging law protects people impacted by an emergency from illegal price gouging on food, shelter, bottled water, fuel and other items necessary for the health, safety and welfare of Oregonians,” said Oregon Attorney General Rosenblum. “We have already received consumer complaints from Oregonians who believe they have been the victim of price gouging in the last 48 hours. Anybody else who believes they have been the victim of price gouging, or who has information regarding potential price gouging, should immediately file a complaint at www.oregonconsumer.gov or call the Attorney General’s Consumer Hotline at 1-877-877-9392.”

Price gouging refers to a dramatic price increase following an “abnormal disruption of the market,” as declared by the Governor as part of a state of emergency...


PUERTO RICO

May 16, 2018

Department of Justice presents precautionary measures and preparations for the 2018 hurricane season

(San Juan) - The Secretary of Justice, Wanda Vázquez Garced, informed that the Department of Justice is taking the precautionary measures to be prepared for the hurricane season 2018, which begins on June 1.

Among the main measures, is the move to the new building, ensure the information of the Land Registry, and work to ensure the effectiveness of information systems and the continuity of work without having to excuse employees for the lack of electrical power and water.

After the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the main headquarters of the Justice Department in Miramar was declared a total loss, after the winds and rains from Maria caused devastating damage to the already deteriorated structure.

This is why it was necessary to identify a new building, and it is expected that by July the move to said facility can begin. It is a building with the appropriate characteristics to withstand the onslaught...

RHODE ISLAND

May 21, 2018

Attorney General Kilmartin, RIHousing, Senator Harold Metts, Representative Mary Messier, Municipal Leaders Urge General Assembly to Preserve Protections for RI Homeowners Facing Foreclosure

Standing with municipal leaders and housing advocates, Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin was joined by Senator Harold Metts, Representative Mary Messier, and RIHousing to urge the General Assembly to preserve protections for Rhode Island homeowners facing foreclosure. The State’s Foreclosure Mediation Act will sunset on July 1, 2018 if no action is taken. This Act ensures that homeowners struggling with their mortgage payment can have the opportunity to meet with their lender and an independent mediator to review their options with the goal of remaining in the home and not having the property foreclosed on.

Senator Metts and Representative Messier have introduced legislation (S2270/H7385) to lift the sunset, but time is running out to act on the legislation. As of today, the Senate is scheduled to vote on Wednesday on amended legislation. The House version has been held for further study.

In 2013, the General Assembly passed foreclosure mediation legislation which provided new...

Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/33269

SOUTH DAKOTA

May 04, 2018

Attorney General Jackley Reminds Medicare Recipients to be Cautious During New Card Distribution Period

PIERRE, S.D. - Attorney General Marty Jackley is warning South Dakota Medicare beneficiaries to avoid falling victim of scams associated with the new Medicare card. Medicare is in the process of replacing old cards that were identified by social security numbers with a new unique number to reduce fraud.

“Medicare began mailing new cards nationwide in April, however, South Dakota is not slated to start receiving cards until June 2018,” said Jackley. “Medicare will not call you to verify whether you have received your new card or not. If you receive a call stating they are Medicare, simply hang up.”

The fraudsters will try to convince you that you will lose your Medicare benefits if you fail to provide the last four digits of your social security number immediately. The fraudsters may also promise a quick delivery of your the new card for a fee or exchange of personal identifying information....

UTAH

May 18, 2018

SB45 Makes Protecting Credit Easier for Utah

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah Attorney General’s office and Department of Commerce are alerting consumers to the benefits of a new law that went into effect May 8th. House Bill 45, sponsored by Rep. Jim Dunnigan and Sen. Todd Weiler, amended the Utah Consumer Credit Protection Act making it easier for Utahns to use credit report security freezes.

“This new law will allow consumers to freeze their credit without paying $10 per credit reporting company and another $10 to thaw,” said Rep. Dunningan. In addition to the removal of fees, the law allows for changes to be made using apps developed by the credit reporting companies as opposed to certified mail. “As the credit bureaus offer freezing and thawing via an app, they are required to honor the request within 15 minutes. This gives the consumer almost real time ability to protect their credit.” ...


VERMONT

May 25, 2018

Texas Company Targeting Local Businesses in School Sports Scam

A Texas company is contacting local businesses in Vermont, asking for “sponsorships” for materials to benefit South Burlington High School. However, according to a report submitted to the Attorney General by the South Burlington Police Department (SBPD), this company has no real affiliation with the school.

Parkway Diner contacted South Burlington Police to report receiving a phone solicitation asking them to sponsor t-shirts for South Burlington High School. Upon further investigation, SBPD determined that this solicitation was not all it appeared to be. The company, calling itself “Sports Media Marketing,” has been the subject of news reports in Texas claiming the company is misleading local businesses into giving them money for schools that they have no formal relationship with.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), a partnership with the University of Vermont, found that the company isn’t following Vermont law. The CAP staff found that the company has not registered to...


May 24, 2018

A.G.: New Data Broker Law Is Good for Vermonters

Attorney General TJ Donovan applauded lawmakers for passage of a new law that protects...
consumers from credit freeze fees, fraudulent acquisition of Vermonters’ data, and establishes a registry and security standards for the “data broker” industry. Vermont is the first state in the nation to successfully pass data broker legislation.

“This new law slashes fees, helps stop fraudsters, and promotes transparency,” said Attorney General TJ Donovan. “Vermonters care about their privacy,” said Donovan. “This bill not only saves them money, but it gives them information and tools to help them keep their personal information secure,” he said.

Data brokers are commercial entities that buy and sell personal information of millions of consumers annually. Many data brokers are unknown to consumers because they have no direct relationship with them. Increasingly the public is concerned about the use – and misuse – of sensitive information that directly affects them. These are transactions over which...


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WEST VIRGINIA

May 24, 2018

Attorney General Morrisey Warns Consumers of Medicare Scam

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey warns consumers to be cautious of Medicare scams that seek to steal personal and sensitive information. Scammers will pose as a Medicare representative or an affiliate and ask for bank account, credit card, Medicare and/or Social Security information, and in some instances seek payment for the consumer's newly issued Medicare card.

More than a dozen West Virginia consumers report having received such calls in recent weeks. “There are many people who unfortunately target and exploit the elderly for nefarious purposes,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “I take that very seriously and have introduced numerous measures to stop it from happening.”

Scam activity may be encouraged by the recent distribution of new Medicare cards. The new cards contain a new beneficiary number, instead of the recipient’s Social Security number, to limit fraud.

Scammers may look to take advantage of the transition. This means consumers...