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

ALASKA

July 12, 2018
State Can Continue Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturer

(Anchorage, AK) – Alaska’s lawsuit against Purdue Pharma, LLC for its role in the opioid crisis passed its first legal hurdle today. The Alaska Superior Court denied the request of Purdue Pharma, LLC to dismiss five of the state’s claims against it, keeping alive the core allegations in the case.

“I view this as one of the most important lawsuits that has been brought since I became attorney general of this great state,” said Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth. “Our opioid crisis has increased crime and torn apart families. Governor Walker is addressing this issue on all fronts, and this lawsuit is part of that effort. Manufacturers such as Purdue must be held accountable for the role their deceptive practices have played in this crisis.”

The Attorney General’s office filed the lawsuit against Purdue Pharma, LLC—maker of the opioid OxyContin—in October 2017. The lawsuit alleged that Purdue used deceptive practices in violation of...


ARIZONA

July 26, 2018
Man Who Blamed Opioid Addiction for Telemarketing Scheme Targeting Elderly Sentenced to 7.5 Years

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced Kyle Dennis, who defrauded elderly investors through a business opportunity scam, will spend more than 7 years in prison. Dennis told investigating agents he committed the offenses due to his opioid addiction and to pay for personal expenses.

Dennis was the sole owner of Red Mountain Holding Company and Internet Advertisement Holding Company. Investigators say between July 6, 2015 and September 25, 2017, Dennis contacted customers by phone to sell web creation services, claiming his businesses were affiliated with Google. Special Agents with the Arizona Attorney General’s Office and the Phoenix Division of the F.B.I. investigated this case and learned Dennis never provided the web creation services to his customers. Agents discovered Dennis obtained approximately $590,820 from multiple investors from Indiana, Washington, Colorado, Minnesota, Montana and Florida. In July, Dennis pled guilty to one count of Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices and to three counts of...

July 17, 2018
AG Brnovich Urges U.S. Supreme Court To Protect Consumers From Class Action Settlement Abuses in Google Case

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich, leading a bipartisan coalition of 19 state Attorneys General from across the country, filed a brief urging the United States Supreme Court to protect consumers from class action settlement abuse when it decides on a Google class action settlement appeal next term.

“Class action lawsuits should be about protecting consumers and obtaining justice,” said Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Unfortunately, in this settlement with Google, the money is lining the pockets of attorneys and select organizations, instead of going to the harmed individuals. Our office is fighting to stop this tactic.”

In the Google Referrer Header Privacy Litigation class action settlement appeal, Google settled a far-reaching consumer privacy case for $8.5 million, but consumers will not receive any of that money. Instead, more than $2 million will go to lawyers, and more than $5 million will go to five organizations that had nothing to do...


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ARKANSAS
July 27, 2018
Successful Effort to Remove Unwashed Poppy Seeds from Online Retailers following AG Request

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced that online sellers Bonanza and eBay have joined Walmart in banning the online sale of unwashed poppy seeds on their websites, as a direct response to the Attorney General Rutledge’s July 13 letter requesting their removal. Walmart had already taken action to no longer be part of the problem by removing unwashed poppy seeds from their shelves.

In May, Attorney General Rutledge released an Attorney General Alert warning consumers of the dangers of unwashed poppy seeds. Prior to that, Rutledge had met with Steve and Betty Hacala to hear the tragic story of their son, Stephen, who died from morphine intoxication after consuming so-called poppy seed tea made from unwashed poppy seeds.

“It is my duty as Attorney General to protect consumers from identified harmful products like unwashed poppy seeds,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The accessibility of lethal, unwashed poppy seeds for...

July 13, 2018

Rutledge Asks Retailers to Remove Unwashed Poppy Seeds from Shelves

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced she has sent a letter to online retailers, including Amazon, Ebay and Etsy, requesting the removal of unwashed poppy seeds from online products. In May, Attorney General Rutledge released an Attorney General Alert warning of the dangers of unwashed poppy seeds and telling the story of Stephen Hacala, who died from morphine intoxication after consuming so-called poppy seed tea made from unwashed poppy seeds.

“This letter outlines the unknown dangers of unwashed poppy seeds,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Although washed poppy seeds are approved for consumption for use such as baking ingredients, unwashed poppy seeds can contain substantial amounts of morphine, codeine and thebaine, which are harmful Schedule II controlled substances.”

Earlier this year, Attorney General Rutledge met with Steve and Betty Hacala to hear the heartbreaking story of their son, Stephen. Stephen had purchased unwashed poppy seeds from Amazon to make...


CALIFORNIA

July 27, 2018

Attorney General Becerra Amends California’s Lawsuit Against Education Secretary DeVos for Withholding Student Loan Debt Relief for Defrauded Corinthian Students

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced today that the California Department of Justice has amended its lawsuit against Education Secretary Betsy DeVos in response to a ruling by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. On June 27, 2018, Judge Sallie Kim dismissed without prejudice California’s lawsuit against DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education for refusing to process debt relief claims submitted by tens of thousands of students who took out federal student loans to attend Corinthian Colleges, Inc.

Judge Kim provided 30 days to file an amended complaint.

“We continue to believe that Corinthian students are being wrongly denied critical relief by a Secretary of Education hostile to their plight. That is why we have decided to amend our lawsuit,” said Attorney General Becerra. “We look forward to seeing this case through in court and to fighting vigorously on behalf of our sons and...

July 18, 2018

**Attorney General Becerra Keeps the Door Open on Cost-Sharing Reduction Case**

SACRAMENTO — California Attorney General Xavier Becerra was today granted a motion to dismiss without prejudice in California v. Trump, a case which was initiated after the Trump Administration’s abrupt decision in October 2017 to stop healthcare subsidy payments required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These mandatory cost-sharing reduction payments, also known as CSRs, help lower out-of-pocket costs for individuals with incomes up to $30,350 and families of four with incomes up to $62,750. In response to the Trump Administration’s October 2017 decision, state regulators in many states, including California, were able absorb the increased costs within the ACA’s silver plans by providing correspondingly higher premium tax credits to mitigate the damage imposed by the Trump Administration’s reckless decision to abruptly end cost-sharing subsidies for consumers.

“In California, we are committed to protecting affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans – no matter what steps the Trump Administration takes to sabotage...


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**FLORIDA**

July 31, 2018

**Court Action Taken Against Fort Myers Furniture Store**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today filed a court action in Fort Myers against a furniture store for deceptively marketing and selling furniture and mattresses to Florida consumers, many of whom are senior citizens. Fort Myers Convertibles, d/b/a Sofa Beds and Recliners Unlimited, and its owners, Lane Granitstein and Jeffrey Granitstein, allegedly deceived consumers out of more than $75,000.

The defendants allegedly misled consumers regarding the status of orders made and strung consumers along for months at a time with a series of excuses and false promises of future delivery. Although the defendants often blamed delays on the suppliers, the complaint alleges that merchandise was ready to be shipped but the delays arose primarily because the defendants failed to pay the suppliers.

Instead of addressing the numerous consumer complaints lodged against the company and financial issues with suppliers, defendants knowingly continued taking additional orders and victimizing more consumers. The Attorney General’s Office...

July 17, 2018

**Summer Camp Closed, Assets Frozen**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi filed a court action against a summer camp company and its owners for suddenly canceling camp and leaving some parents without refunds. The Second Judicial Circuit Court granted the Attorney General’s motion for temporary injunction prohibiting defendants Camp Indian Springs, LLC, Camp Warrior, LLC, Costa Vathis, and Derek Hart from taking further deposits. The court also granted the Attorney General’s request to freeze the defendants’ assets.

“Summer camp is an exciting tradition for many Florida children, and it is so unfair that these kids may be deprived of camp because of the actions of these defendants. Many of these campers are now scrambling to make alternative plans and some parents are still without refunds after the defendants closed the camp,” said Attorney General Bondi. “My office is pursuing refunds and legal action to keep the defendants from deceiving any other campers.” The Attorney General’s complaint alleges that...

➢ **Original Press Release:**

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July 13, 2018

**Attorney General Bondi Takes Legal Action Against Group Travel Sales Scammers**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today filed a court action against Harmony International Tours, LLC and its owners, Bradley R. Matheson and Margaret L. Matheson. According to the complaint, Harmony International and its owners offered group travel packages to college, high school, church choir and band groups scheduled to perform in foreign countries and to participate, in some instances, in cultural exchange programs. After receiving payments from the various music groups, the defendants allegedly failed to provide the travel packages and reimburse consumers as promised. The complaint alleges that the defendants operated the alleged travel scam primarily out of Key West and sold company group travel packages to consumers throughout Florida and the United States. The defendants allegedly accepted consumers’ installment payments knowing that they had no intention of making, or ability to make, the promised travel arrangements. This complaint also alleges violation of Florida’s Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act...

➢ **Original Press Release:**
  http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/2E0EF8B5E4D01D5D852582C9004E7167

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July 02, 2018

**Attorney General Bondi Takes Legal Action Against Student Loan Debt Relief Scammers**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi has filed a court action against several
companies allegedly involved in a student loan debt relief scam. According to the complaint, Integrity Group US Inc.; OnlineDoc Prep Inc.; Online Student Loan.Org Inc.; Students Loan Services.Org Inc.; and owner Thomas H. Rohan, induced consumers into paying upfront fees for student loan debt consolidation, loan forgiveness and other debt relief services never provided or not performed as promised.

The complaint alleges that, Integrity Group US Inc. and the other corporate defendants operated the unlawful enterprise primarily out of Boynton Beach, but offered debt management services to consumers throughout Florida and the United States. The complaint further alleges that Rohan specifically targeted public-sector workers, including teachers in Palm Beach County, and collected upfront fees of up to $999 from unsuspecting consumers. The filing is the latest in a string of legal actions taken by Attorney General Bondi’s Office regarding student...

➢ Original Press Release:
http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/F8236372CE4854D7852582BE006371AA

GEORGIA

July 25, 2018
Carr Announces Indictments in Identity Fraud Cases

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced indictments in two identity fraud cases.

“Our office is committed to stopping criminals who perpetrate identity theft and financial fraud and will continue to hold them accountable for their actions,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “I applaud our Consumer Protection Unit and Special Prosecutions Unit for their joint efforts in investigating and prosecuting these cases.”

Darnell Antwan Samples

Darnell Antwan Samples, a former Verizon Wireless employee, has been indicted for his role in an identity fraud scheme that compromised the data of 58 Verizon Wireless customers. A Fulton County Grand Jury has charged Samples with 24 counts of Identity Fraud. This case was referred to the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Unit by Verizon Wireless after customer complaints of unauthorized charges led to the discovery that the personal identifying information of dozens of customers had been compromised. Samples worked at a Verizon store in East Point,...

SCAM ALERT: Carr Issues Warning About Sweepstakes Scams Targeting Older Georgians
ATLANTA, GA – The Office of the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Unit has received a number of complaints about sweepstakes scams targeting older consumers.
“We are urging consumers to get involved and speak with their friends and family about how to avoid this scam and others,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “We have an obligation to protect our older, at-risk citizens, and a conversation about this scam is the best first-line-of-defense. Just recently, our office created an Older Adult Consumer Protection Guide to help support Georgians in this effort. It is available for free download on our website.”
This is a recurring scam that is currently making the rounds in Georgia again. The con-artists contact their intended victims in a variety of ways, including calling on the phone, faxing, mailing, emailing or through pop-up boxes on websites. Victims are told they have won a big sweepstakes prize, but in order to...


ILLINOIS
July 11, 2018
ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISERS, SEEKS TO BAN THEM FROM OPERATING IN ILLINOIS
Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed lawsuits against professional fundraisers based in the Chicago suburbs seeking to ban them from operating in Illinois for numerous violations of the state’s Solicitation for Charity Act.
In two separate lawsuits filed in Cook County Circuit Court, Madigan sued Community Guide Magazines Inc. (CGM) and Supplemental Security Foundations Inc. (SSF) for various fundraising violations, including making misleading representations to people during fundraising solicitations for charities.
“These fundraisers are engaged in illegal fundraising,” Madigan said. “They kept the majority of money they collected instead of giving it to the charity they claim to be raising it for. People who want to donate to a charity should contact the charity directly if they want to ensure their entire contribution benefits the charity.”
Madigan’s lawsuit against the Cicero-based CGM also names its operator Ron McMenamy, as well as professional solicitors Stephen Ashely, Ronald Chilman, Jarrod Horton, James Jindela, Peter...

IOWA

July 18, 2018

Iowans seek $11.23 million in Western Union refund claims

Iowans who wired money to scammers via Western Union have applied for a total of $11.23 million in refunds as part of a national settlement with the company. The number of claims total 2,139 from mailing addresses in Iowa. The claims include one Iowa couple who lost $500,000 of their retirement savings, and several people who lost tens of thousands of dollars. The victims report they wired money to scammers who promised romance, international sweepstakes winnings and large inheritances from foreign countries, among other claims.


The settlement administrator continues to accept claims. Refund amounts will depend on the number of verified claims and approved losses.

Attorney General Tom…


KANSAS

July 27, 2018

Augusta modular home builder banned from doing business in Kansas, ordered to repay more than $200,000 to consumers

EL DORADO – (July 27, 2018) – An Augusta modular home builder has been banned from doing business in Kansas and ordered to repay more than $200,000 to Kansas consumers after being found in violation of consumer protection laws, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said. East Side Factory Built Homes, LLC, which also did business as East Side Homes and Factory Outlet Homes, of Augusta, as well as the business’s owner, Ryan Andes, have been enjoined from conducting business in Kansas. Butler County District Judge Mike Ward entered the injunction this week after the defendants failed to respond to a lawsuit filed by the attorney general in May. Ward also ordered Andes and the company to pay restitution totaling $206,733.58 to four Kansas consumers, as well as a civil penalty and the costs of the attorney general’s investigation.

Schmidt had alleged that the defendants accepted payment from the consumers for modular...
July 24, 2018

**Jefferson County roofer banned from doing business in Kansas, ordered to repay consumers**

TOPEKA – (July 24, 2018) – A Jefferson County roofer has been banned from doing business in Kansas and ordered to repay two consumers after being found in violation of Kansas consumer protection laws, Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Sonny Peterson, of Nortonville, who did business as S&J Carpentry/Roofing and S&J Carpentry, was enjoined from operating as a roofing contractor in the State of Kansas unless and until he properly registers with the attorney general’s office, as required by law. Jefferson County District Judge Gary L. Nafziger last week entered the injunction after the company failed to respond to a lawsuit filed by the attorney general in 2016. The case had been on hold after Peterson filed for bankruptcy in 2017. His bankruptcy case was dismissed last week. Nafziger also ordered Peterson to pay a total of $13,400 in restitution to two Jefferson County consumers, as well as a civil penalty...


July 19, 2018

**AG Derek Schmidt: Veterans charity shut down for violating consumer protection laws**

TOPEKA – (July 19, 2018) – A charity claiming to raise funds to send care packages to deployed service members has been shut down for violating state charity and consumer protection laws, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Tennessee-based Operation Troop Aid (OTA) reached an agreement with Kansas and 15 other states to resolve allegations that it mishandled funds that were donated to support its stated purpose of sending care packages to troops stationed overseas. The agreement requires the organization to cease operating, wind down its operation and be dissolved. The agreement also bars OTA’s CEO from serving as a fiduciary or soliciting for any nonprofit organization in the future. A copy of the agreed final judgment is available at http://bit.ly/2Lbtj32.

“This organization took advantage of Kansans’ and other Americans’ support for the members of the military,” Schmidt said. “Those responsible are being held accountable for their actions.” OTA participated in an unlawful...

KENTUCKY

July 12, 2018

Beshear Alleges Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Created Dangerous Opioid Market in Kentucky for Profit Despite Addiction Risks

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 12, 2018) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today filed suit against St. Louis-based pharmaceutical manufacturer Mallinckrodt for profiting from its massive supply of opioids to Kentucky doctors and patients for decades despite knowing and misrepresenting the addictive nature of their drugs.

The lawsuit alleges Mallinckrodt, founded in 1867 and one of the earliest producers of morphine and codeine, sold and promoted its opioids by falsely claiming the drugs could be taken in higher doses without disclosing the greater risks of potential addiction. Beshear said this action allowed the company to grow its market in Kentucky while contributing to the state’s drug epidemic.

“Our lawsuit alleges Mallinckrodt’s dangerously false marketing of its opioids correlates directly to the skyrocketing addiction, overdoses and deaths in Kentucky.” Beshear said. “The company generated over $3 billion in revenues in 2017, and we are seeking to hold them accountable under Kentucky law by making...

➢ Original Press Release: https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=603

MARYLAND

July 24, 2018

Consumer Protection Division Orders Swift Van Lines to Cease Operations and Pay Over $470,000 in Penalties and Costs

BALTIMORE,

MD (July 24, 2018) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that his Consumer Protection Division issued a Final Order finding that Swift Van Lines, LLC, formerly known as Revolution Moving and Storage, LLC, and its owner, Juan Carlos Martinez, repeatedly violated the Consumer Protection Act and the Maryland Household Goods Movers Act, and requiring them to return money to consumers and pay penalties and costs amounting to at least $471,445.45. The Division found that Swift Van Lines provided consumers with low estimates for moving services, but then demanded far more money while the consumers’ goods were held on moving trucks. When consumers objected to the outrageously high prices, the company refused to deliver consumers’ goods until paid in full.

“Swift Van Lines repeatedly violated the law,” said Attorney General Frosh. “It held consumers’
goods hostage, forcing people to go without vital medication, medical devices, beds and the...
“Just when teen cigarette use has hit a...
July 11, 2018

Credit Union to Provide $650,000 in Loan Relief and Cash Refunds to Hundreds of Massachusetts Consumers

Boston — A Tennessee-based credit union will discharge approximately $450,000 in education-related loan debt and will make available $200,000 in cash refunds to hundreds of affected Massachusetts students in connection with their purchases from The College Network Inc., Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Under an assurance of discontinuance filed by the AG’s Office in Suffolk Superior Court, Southeast Financial Credit Union (Southeast), will discharge loans made to Massachusetts students of The College Network, a for-profit company that marketed online study guides and educational services to consumers, including many prospective nurses. Southeast will also request the removal of negative loan information from the consumers’ credit reports.

“The College Network cheated hundreds of Massachusetts consumers by making false promises about their online educational materials and services,” said AG Healey. “This settlement holds the lender accountable for profiting from this scheme and will provide $650,000 in discharges and refunds to the consumers.”

The AG’s Office...

July 09, 2018

Quincy-Based Electrical Supply Distributor to Pay More Than $2.3 Million for Overbilling on Statewide Contract

Boston — A Quincy-based electrical and lighting product supplier will pay more than $2.3 million to settle allegations that it overbilled hundreds of state entities for supplies it sold them under a five-year contract with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance’s Operational Services Division (OSD), Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The Assurance of Discontinuance, filed in Suffolk Superior Court, resolves allegations that Granite City Electric Supply Co. violated the Massachusetts False Claims Act and Consumer Protection Act by failing to implement controls, policies and procedures to ensure it was pricing goods in accordance with its contractual obligations.

“This company engaged in a pattern of overbilling that cost hundreds of government agencies – including school districts, cities, and towns – millions of dollars,” AG Healey said. “We are pleased to be returning money to those public bodies.”
Under the terms of the settlement, Granite City will refund more than $1.18 million...


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**MICHIGAN**

July 19, 2018

**Schuette Seeks Dissolution of Opus Bono Sacerdotii Charity for Lack of Governance, Diversion of Assets, and Deceptive Fundraising Practices**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today filed a cease and desist order and a notice of intended action to file a civil suit against Opus Bono Sacerdotii (OBS) for violating Michigan’s Nonprofit Corporation Act and Charitable Solicitations Act. OBS is a charity based in Lapeer County that raises money nationwide to assist priests facing criminal charges and other difficulties. If OBS fails to resolve the allegations, Schuette intends to file a civil lawsuit to dissolve OBS and obtain restitution, civil penalties, and other relief.

**CASE BACKGROUND**

Schuette’s Charitable Trust Section began investigating OBS in 2017, following a complaint from a former OBS employee. The investigation revealed the following:

No board governance – From its incorporation in 2002 through the commencement of Schuette’s investigation, OBS’s board of directors failed to govern OBS activities, thereby allowing OBS President Joe Maher and Treasurer Peter Ferrara to use OBS for their personal benefit. ...

- Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-473339--,00.html

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**MINNESOTA**

July 02, 2018

**Attorney General Lori Swanson Files Lawsuit Against Purdue Pharma For Deceptive Marketing Of Opioids**

Attorney General Lori Swanson today filed a lawsuit against Purdue Pharma, L.P., a Connecticut-based pharmaceutical company, seeking to recover money for taxpayers for the increased health care and societal costs incurred as a result of the company’s misrepresentations about the addictive nature and risks of its opioid painkillers.

“Prescription painkillers can be helpful in relieving pain when properly used and prescribed, but this company misrepresented and minimized the addictive nature of its drugs in order to sell more of them,” said Attorney General Swanson.

Purdue introduced its blockbuster painkiller OxyContin in 1996. Before that, physicians were
concerned about the risk of addiction from opioid painkillers, and generally limited their use to short-term acute pain, cancer, or end-of-life care. Purdue’s press release announcing OxyContin claimed: “[t]he fear of [opioid] addiction is exaggerated” and quoted an executive of the American Pain Society (a Purdue-funded organization) as falsely claiming: “there is very little risk of…


MISSISSIPPI

July 24, 2018
AG Hood Launches Lawsuit Against Student Loan Lenders

Our office issued the information below this insert in a press release regarding the lawsuit Attorney General Jim Hood filed against Navient on July 17, 2018. The following information is an update for persons contacting our office regarding the Navient lawsuit:

Thank you for contacting the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General regarding the lawsuit Attorney General Jim Hood filed against Navient on July 17, 2018. In the lawsuit, the Attorney General charges Navient and two related entities with deceptive and unfair practices in violation of Mississippi’s consumer protection laws. The lawsuit seeks, among other things, an injunction requiring these companies to change their practices.

Importantly, the Attorney General’s lawsuit is not a consumer class action. Consumers have filed nationwide class action lawsuits against Navient, Sallie Mae, and other loan servicing companies. Additionally, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also has filed a lawsuit seeking restitution and damages for consumers....


MONTANA

July 24, 2018
Attorney General Fox Holds Tobacco Companies Accountable

HELENA – Concluding a multi-year legal battle between the state of Montana and several major tobacco manufacturers, Attorney General Tim Fox announced a settlement agreement Tuesday that ensures the tobacco companies follow through with past commitments to the state.

Since 2004, nineteen tobacco companies have disputed, withheld or refused to transfer annual payments owed to the state of Montana. The payments owed to the state were agreed to in the 1998 nationwide Master Settlement Agreement resolving multiple state lawsuits over alleged concealment and misrepresentation of information regarding adverse health impact related to use of tobacco products. As outlined in the original 1998 settlement, a portion of the
annual payments by the companies to the state are intended to encourage “diligent
enforcement” of a stipulated tobacco statute.
Withholding payments to state governments is a tactic collectively deployed by the same
tobacco companies across the country. Montana is the only state in the nation...

- Original Press Release: https://dojmt.gov/attorney-general-fox-holds-tobacco-companies-
  accountable/

NEVADA

July 26, 2018
Attorney General Laxalt Announces Guilty Plea for $180,000 Mortgage Lending Fraud Scam
Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Trung Anh Le, 36,
of California, pleaded guilty to one count of pattern of mortgage lending fraud, a category “B”
felony. The fraud was committed in March of 2015.
Le misrepresented himself as the owner of three pieces of real estate property in Las Vegas by
impersonating the true owners of the property as a way to secure a loan in the amount of
$180,000. As a result of Le’s misrepresentation, the title company filed deeds with the Clark
County Recorder’s Office, effectively encumbering the properties.
“My office is committed to protecting homeowners from fraudulent scams, and I encourage
those who suspect they’ve fallen victim to a scam to file a complaint with my office,” said
Laxalt.
Pattern of mortgage lending fraud is punishable by 3-20 years of imprisonment and a fine of no
more than $50,000. The sentencing hearing for Le...

- Original Press Release: 

NEW JERSEY

July 27, 2018
Ocean County Lawyer Who Hosted Radio Show on Elder Law Pleads Guilty to Stealing Millions of Dollars from Elderly Clients
TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced that a prominent Ocean County
attorney who hosted a radio show and taught seminars on elder law pleaded guilty today to
stealing millions of dollars from elderly clients of his law firm and laundering the money
through various bank accounts, including his attorney trust and business accounts. The victims
generally did not have close relatives to guard their interests and in some cases suffered from
dementia.
Robert Novy, 66, of Brick, N.J., pleaded guilty today to first-degree money laundering before Superior Court Judge Michael T. Collins in Ocean County. Under the plea agreement, the state will recommend that Novy be sentenced to 10 years in state prison, including three years and four months of parole ineligibility. In pleading guilty, Novy admitted that he stole millions of dollars from law clients. The state’s investigation revealed that he stole nearly $3 million from at least...

➢ Original Press Release: https://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases18/pr20180727c.html

July 26, 2018
AG Grewal Demands That Gun Developer Halt Plans to Publish Printable-Gun Computer Files; Threatens Imminent Legal Action
TRENTON – Acting to protect New Jersey residents from an emerging threat to public safety, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal today sent a “cease and desist” letter to a firearm developer that plans to publicly release computer files on August 1 that would enable individuals to create firearms using a 3-D printer.
“You are directed to cease and desist from publishing printable-gun computer files for use by New Jersey residents,” Attorney General Grewal warned Texas-based Defense Distributed in today’s letter. “The files you plan to publish offer individuals, including criminals, codes that they can use to create untraceable firearms—and even to make assault weapons that are illegal in my state.”
Citing New Jersey’s public nuisance law and prior court decisions that have upheld claims against gun manufacturers for similar reckless actions, Attorney General Grewal threatened Defense Distributed with “legal action” if it fails to comply with his demand to halt its planned...

➢ Original Press Release: https://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases18/pr20180726c.html

NEW YORK
July 24, 2018
A.G. Underwood Announces Guilty Pleas Of Unlicensed Asbestos Testing Company And Managers For Defrauding Customers Throughout The Capital Region
CAPITAL REGION — Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced the guilty pleas of Albany Environmental Consultants, LLC (“AEC”), headquartered in Albany, NY; its owner Ronda M. Dolan, 51, of Earlton, NY; and its Project Manager Brian K. McLaren, 54 of Troy, NY for illegally using the identity of a licensed asbestos testing company to defraud customers into believing AEC was licensed by New York State to test for asbestos. In reality, AEC’s license had expired in 2014 – yet 19 unsuspecting victims paid almost $40,000 to the defendants for asbestos-handling services, only to have the work redone by a properly licensed company.
“We all know about the extreme risks posed by asbestos exposure,” said Attorney General
Underwood. “It is unconscionable that a company would work without a New York license – undermining the public trust and risking the health of unsuspecting customers. We’ll continue to work with our partners...


July 17, 2018

**A.G. Underwood Announces Major Prison Sentence For Repeated Fraudster Who Scammed His Own Mother, Girlfriends, And Veterans**

NEW YORK — Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced the conviction of Franklin S. Marone, 55, of Queens, NY for multiple schemes to defraud – including falsifying financial disclosures to avoid paying restitution to victims from a $5.4 million securities fraud scheme in which he was previously convicted, and stealing over $360,000 from his now 89-year old mother, multiple ex-girlfriends, and a military veteran. Marone’s combined sentencings in Greene County Court and Queens Supreme Court will result in a total state prison term of 10 1/3 to 29 years. Marone was also ordered to make reparations in excess of $1.5 million.

Today, Franklin Marone was sentenced by Honorable Terry J. Wilhelm in Greene County Court to 2 to 4 years in prison for submitting fraudulent financial disclosures to conceal his assets from the court in order to avoid paying restitution to the victims of his $5.4 million securities fraud scheme...


July 17, 2018

**A.G. Underwood Announces Indictments Of Construction Firm Executives In Alleged Scheme To Rake In Millions Through Public Contracts**

ALBANY – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced the unsealing of an indictment in Albany County charging Michael Martin, 47, of Latham, and D. Scott Henzel, 52, of Albany, with fraudulently obtaining public construction contracts worth millions of dollars by stealing the identities of two minority-owned businesses, and willfully failing to pay over $400,000 in wages to over 50 employees. Martin is separately charged in a second indictment unsealed in Schenectady County with stealing over $150,000 from a minority-owned business pursuant to a fake lease agreement, and over $200,000 from Allegheny Casualty by filing a false insurance claim on behalf of the same minority-owned business.

“As we allege, the defendants crafted a shameful and elaborate scheme to line their pockets at the expense of minority-owned businesses, New York taxpayers, and their own employees,” said Attorney General Underwood. “We will continue to aggressively root out fraud and protect
New Yorkers...


July 13, 2018

**A.G. Underwood Sues Rochester Home Improvement Contracting Business For Defrauding Consumers Through Fake Online Reviews, Failure To Perform Work**

ROCHESTER – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a lawsuit against Rochester-based home improvement contracting business operators Alvis Sprague and Sarah Crawford and their company A-S Contracting for deceptive online advertising and failing to perform the services they promised to consumers. Monroe County Supreme Court issued a preliminary injunction and temporary restraining order that immediately bans Crawford and Sprague from operating a home improvement business in New York and freezes their assets while the lawsuit is pending.

“Consumers deserve to know that they can trust online reviews – not be deceived by the company itself,” said Attorney General Underwood. “Companies that seek to deceive New Yorkers will be held accountable by my office.”

The lawsuit alleges that Sarah Crawford and Alvis Sprague used fake reviews on YellowPages.com and Yelp to promote their business, A-S Contracting. Sprague and Crawford allegedly gave A-S Contracting 5-star reviews and encouraged their friends to do...


July 06, 2018

**A.G. Underwood Announces Settlement With Niagara Falls Landlord Who Provided Tenants With Illegal Leases**

NIAGARA FALLS – Today Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood announced a settlement with a Niagara Falls landlord, David Ramirez, for including numerous illegal clauses in his residential leases. Ramirez, an out-of-town landlord, owns over a dozen residential properties in the Niagara Falls area. For many years, Ramirez required tenants to sign leases that purported to forego their rights under New York landlord tenant law. As a result of today’s settlement, Ramirez must pay a fine of $5,000 and provide tenants with leases that comply with the law; he will also be subject to oversight and monitoring.

“My office has zero tolerance for landlords who attempt to evade the legal protections New York renters are entitled,” said Attorney General Underwood. “We will continue to ensure that landlords comply with the law and uphold their responsibilities to their tenants.”
Ramirez’s leases required his tenants give up any rights under “NY eviction law” and claimed...


July 05, 2018
A.G. Underwood Announces Settlement With Brooklyn Auto Dealer Over Deceptive Practices That Targeted Non-English Speakers
BROOKLYN – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a settlement requiring Bay Ridge Honda of Brooklyn to reform its business practices and pay over $423,000 in restitution and penalties, after the office received dozens of complaints from New Yorkers about unwanted charges and fraudulent sales tactics that targeted non-English speakers. Many of the consumers who complained were Mandarin and Cantonese speakers who negotiated their sales or lease contracts in Chinese, but were only provided English documents that they later discovered contained different terms and unwanted and costly aftermarket items in their bills.

Under the settlement, Attorney General Underwood obtained restitution for 47 known New Yorkers harmed by the dealership’s practices, as well as requirements that the dealership stop engaging in the alleged deceptive practices, and modify employee training and the processing of consumer complaints. Importantly, Bay Ridge Honda will ensure future sales and lending documents are translated into the...


July 03, 2018
A.G. Underwood Announces Indictment Of Financial Advisor Thomas Lagan For Stealing From Family Trusts He Oversaw In $9 Million Scheme
ALBANY – New York Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood announced the grand jury indictment of financial advisor and lawyer Thomas Lagan for a scheme in which he and former Town of Guilderland Judge Richard Sherwood plundered over $9 million from family trusts they were responsible for overseeing.

“The defendants orchestrated a complex scheme to steal millions from trusts they were supposed to protect,” said Attorney General Underwood. “We will continue to ensure that those who game the system and violate the public trust are brought to justice.”

As detailed in the complaint, Lagan and Sherwood have provided estate planning and related legal and financial services to Capital Region philanthropists Warren and Pauline Bruggeman and Pauline Bruggeman’s sister, Anne Urban, since at least 2006. The Bruggemans each created a revocable trust, which contained sub-trusts designed to provide for Anne Urban and Pauline’s
other sister, Julia Rentz. Other funds were to be awarded to...


July 02, 2018

A.G. Underwood Announces Settlement With Campground Companies Over Deceptive Practices

ADIRONDACKS — Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced a settlement with Adventure Resorts of America, LLC, Adirondack Adventure Resorts of Lake George, Inc., and Saratoga Escape Lodges & RV Resort, Inc., concerning the campgrounds’ misleading marketing and sale of campground memberships. The companies, which until recently shared common ownership, operate campgrounds located in Sturbridge, Massachusetts; Diamond Point, New York; and Greenfield Center, New York. The settlement requires the payment of $41,133.56 in restitution to consumers who sought to cancel their contracts during their contractual cancellation period, or because the campground facilities fell short of how they were represented during sales pitches, as well as reform its business practices.

“When New Yorkers spend thousands of dollars on a membership, they should receive the services and amenities they’re promised,” said Attorney General Underwood. “This settlement compensates consumers who were duped and requires the companies to fully deliver what they promise to...


NORTH DAKOTA

July 27, 2018

CONSUMER FRAUD JUDGMENT ISSUED AGAINST DAKOTA POLE BUILDINGS INC.

BISMARCK, ND – The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division sued Matt D. Lano of LaMoure, ND, doing business as Dakota Pole Buildings, Inc., for violations of the consumer fraud and contractor licensing laws. Neither Lano nor his business has ever held a contractor’s license.

The Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation in September 2017, after receiving a complaint about Lano. Investigators learned that over the past three years, Lano had taken numerous advance payments from homeowners in Barnes, Burleigh, Stutsman, and McLean counties, for the construction of pole buildings on their properties, but had not completed any of the work. The LaMoure County District Court found that Lano was operating without a contractor’s license, abandoned consumer projects, diverted consumer funds, and had engaged in consumer fraud, and entered a judgment against him. The District Court’s judgment includes $5,650.00 in civil penalties, fees, and costs to the Attorney General’s Office. Several
Ohio

July 25, 2018

Attorney General DeWine Files Consumer Protection Action Against Medina Contractor for Failure to Deliver

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against the operators of Ashley Contractors LLC, a home improvement and construction company accused of failing to deliver promised services to northeast Ohio consumers. The lawsuit seeks reimbursement for consumers and an injunction to prevent any further violations of Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act.

Consumers complained that they paid Ashley Contractors thousands of dollars for home remodeling projects they never received. After making deposits for kitchen, bath, or basement renovations, consumers said Ashley Contractors either did no work or did only partial, shoddy work. Reported consumer losses total more than $82,000.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit, filed in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, accuses Ashley Nihiser and Brian Stepp, both doing business as Ashley Contractors LLC, of failing to deliver promised services and performing shoddy work. The company, which was registered in 2015, dissolved in 2017.

“Many contractors do great work, but...”

July 17, 2018

Man Accused of Defrauding People in Ohio and Other States

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced that an Alaska man is facing criminal charges for allegedly defrauding people in Ohio and other states out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Andrew Jensen, 30, of Anchorage, was arraigned Monday in the Morgan County Court of Common Pleas. He previously was indicted by a Morgan County grand jury on 29 felony counts, including telecommunications fraud, identity fraud, grand theft of a motor vehicle, theft from the elderly, money laundering, and misuse of credit cards.

According to investigators, Jensen lied to people (claiming he was a successful businessman or military veteran, for example) to convince them to give him money, property, or services. He allegedly made misleading statements to obtain loans, lines of credit, vehicles, and other goods...
or services. Investigators believe at least 22 people, including an elderly man in Morgan County, have been affected and that losses total more than...


July 02, 2018

**Cincinnati-Area Man Indicted in Alleged Roof Scam**

(CINCINNATI) — Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced that a Milford man has been indicted for allegedly stealing money from Cincinnati-area homeowners after offering to repair their roofs.

Robert J. Collins, 35, 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 (six counts)
- Theft, fourth-degree felonies (four counts)
- Theft, fifth-degree felonies (six counts)

Collins is accused of stealing over $50,000 from nine homeowners. According to investigators, he operated under the name United Home Solutions and offered to repair homeowners’ roofs, but after homeowners paid for materials, Collins allegedly failed to make any repairs or deliver any materials.

The case was investigated by the Ohio Attorney General’s Economic Crimes Unit. Attorneys with the Economic Crimes Unit have been appointed as special prosecutors by the Hamilton County Prosecutor’s Office.

Consumers who suspect a scam or unfair sales practice should...


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**OKLAHOMA**

July 19, 2018

**AG Hunter, Tulsa VFW Commander & AARP Announce 20 Count Felony Indictment on Tulsa Man for Charity Fraud Involving a Veterans Organization**

TULSA -- Attorney General Mike Hunter was joined today by Tulsa VFW Commander Joshua Starks and AARP’s Wayne Blackmon to announce a 20-count felony indictment on a Tulsa man for his role in a charity fraud case that has defrauded around 600 individuals in Oklahoma.

An investigation has found Jeff McDougal is alleged to have solicited charitable contributions on behalf of American Oklahoma Veterans of Green Country for the purpose of assisting veterans, through his for-profit fundraising business, Cornerstone Oklahoma.

The investigation revealed a number of individuals McDougal defrauded believed they were
giving to a similarly named charity called the Green Country Veterans Association. A review of bank records and account information for American Oklahoma Veterans of Green Country show none of the funds solicited by McDougal were used to assist veterans or organizations helping veterans. The funds in the account were going to McDougal, or different accounts controlled by McDougal. He is being...


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**PENNSYLVANIA**

July 29, 2018

**Attorney General Shapiro, Governor Wolf, State Police Successfully Block Access to 3D Downloadable Guns in Pennsylvania**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Governor Tom Wolf and the Pennsylvania State Police tonight successfully blocked access to 3D downloadable guns in Pennsylvania. Following an emergency hearing in federal court in Philadelphia initiated by the Attorney General, a company seeking to distribute downloadable gun files over the Internet agreed to make its sites unaccessible to Pennsylvania users, and to not upload any new 3D gun files.

Before today’s hearing, the company, Defense Distributed, had promised that on August 1, “the age of the downloadable gun formally begins.” Today, the defendants claimed in court that they began distributing gun files even earlier – on Friday. By Sunday, 1,000 people had already downloaded 3D plans for AR-15 semi-automatic assault rifles.

The public safety controversy erupted after Defense Distributed recently settled with the federal government following a lengthy litigation, allowing it to continue its ‘at home’ gun-printing business. Left unchecked, Americans would be able...


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July 26, 2018

**Attorney General Josh Shapiro Sues Five Companies, Two Individuals in Mortgage Modification Scam**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced a lawsuit against five Pennsylvania mortgage foreclosure companies and two company owners for deceiving consumers into signing contracts to have their mortgage loans modified – and never delivering the services paid for. In some cases, homeowners instructed by the scammers to not pay their
mortgages ultimately lost their homes in sheriff’s sales.
The Office of Attorney General received 21 complaints from Pennsylvania consumers, and nearly 50 more from consumers across the country, who entered into mortgage modification contracts with companies owned by Mark Goldstein and Drew Alia, including GMK Solutions, the Foreclosure Law Center; Century Legal Group; Alia Law Group; and the Law Offices of Drew Alia. Pennsylvania homeowners and other consumers wound up agreeing to pay the defendants more than $280,000 through their scam conducted between 2008 and 2015.

Here’s how the scam worked:
The defendants signed contracts with homeowners, promising to do a...


July 20, 2018
Deceptive “For-Sale-By-Owner” Home Scheme is Targeted for Elimination by Attorney General Josh Shapiro

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced a lawsuit against a Texas company for deceiving Pennsylvania consumers into unfair “for sale by owner” purchases of uninhabitable family homes. This scam involved misleading property deeds and preyed upon low-income homeowners who were sold homes at vastly inflated prices that often lack basic essentials like heat or electricity.

More than 70 would-be Pennsylvania homeowners entered into unfair “for sale by owner” purchases with Harbour Portfolio Advisers, and wound up agreeing to pay Harbour more than $2,600,000 plus 9.9 percent interest in transactions between 2010 to 2016.

Here’s how the scam worked: Harbour Portfolio bought up large numbers of financially distressed homes, usually in low-income neighborhoods. They flooded the neighborhoods with “For Sale by Owner” signs that attracted potential buyers. Utilities were turned off during house tours – masking major problems in the homes. The buyers, who lacked the experience to understand the complexities...


July 13, 2018
Attorney General Shapiro Demands Answers from Temple University Following Reports of Falsifying Data

HARRISBURG – Today, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro sent a letter demanding answers from Temple University President Richard M. Englert about the University’s business and marketing practices in the wake of recent media reports indicating that the Fox School of
Business and Management ("Fox") knowingly provided false data to rankings organizations for several years.

“As Attorney General and the Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, my job is to ensure students and their families receive the benefit of the bargain when they make significant expenditures to advance their education,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. “It is especially troubling to learn that an institution entrusted with significant Commonwealth funding to educate our citizens is alleged to have so flagrantly violated the trust of students, families and taxpayers alike.”

As the Attorney General writes in his letter to President Englert, news reports indicate that Fox intentionally provided false information to school...


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**TENNESSEE**

July 05, 2018

**Statement from Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III regarding Purdue Pharma litigation**

“We are pleased Purdue Pharma decided to withdraw its motion for a protective order, and the State’s complaint is now available to the public on our website or from the Knox County Clerk’s Office. As outlined in our response to the motion, we believe the public has the right to know what is going on in this important lawsuit. We will now concentrate on moving the litigation forward.” General Slatery said.

Link to complaint: https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/working-for-tennessee/filings-of-interest/purdue-pharma.html


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**TEXAS**

July 05, 2018

**AG Paxton: 48 Texas Gas Stations Agree to Refund Consumers for Hurricane Harvey Price Gouging**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that his Consumer Protection Division finalized settlements with 48 Texas gas stations accused of price gouging during the state of disaster declared for Hurricane Harvey.

Under separate agreements, 48 businesses will pay $166,592 in civil restitution to refund Texans who were charged exorbitant or excessive prices for gasoline. Most of the businesses that agreed to these Assurances of Voluntary Compliance (AVCs) operate gas stations in the
Dallas-Fort Worth area.

“At the outset of Harvey, I made it clear that my office would not tolerate price gouging of Texans by anyone looking to profit from the hurricane,” Attorney General Paxton said. “The response to Hurricane Harvey showed the incredible generosity of Texans. These settlements should teach the few who take advantage of their fellow residents to follow the law in the future.”

As Hurricane Harvey was approaching the Texas coast last year, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state...


VERMONT

July 13, 2018

Attorney General Gets Money Back for Shrinedom Ticketholders

Vermonters and others who purchased tickets to a concert gone wrong will be eligible for refunds. The Office of Attorney General T.J. Donovan has resolved its investigation of Shrinedom 2017, a rock festival that was supposed to take place on Saturday, September 16, 2017, in Irasburg. Seven bands were contracted to play, including local bands and national acts Vince Neil, Slaughter, Warrant, Lita Ford and Firehouse. On the day of the festival, the organizers had not sold enough tickets to pay the national bands, who did not perform. The bands and the public were told that there were issues with the generators, when in fact not enough tickets were sold to pay the bands.

Ten thousand dollars have been provided for ticketholders who have not yet been reimbursed. Approximately $10,000 has already been reimbursed to consumers by PayPal, which processed many of the payments. Ticket buyers eligible for reimbursement can submit...


WASHINGTON

July 27, 2018

AG Ferguson files criminal charges against Pierce County individuals for repeatedly defrauding immigrants

TACOMA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today filed criminal charges against Edwin Cruz-Perez and Maurice Terry for repeatedly violating previous orders to stop providing unqualified immigration services to Washington consumers. Immigration services fraud is illegal under Washington state’s Immigration Services Fraud
Prevention Act (ISFPA). The law protects consumers from unauthorized entities that peddle assistance completing immigration forms and navigating immigration processes that legally can only be provided by qualified attorneys and representatives authorized under federal law. After an Attorney General investigation in 2011, Cruz and Terry entered into a consent decree in which they agreed to stop providing unqualified assistance to Washingtonians in immigration matters. A judge found that they violated the decree in 2016 and barred the two from providing immigration services in any capacity. Despite that court order, AGO investigators found that Cruz and Terry continued to provide immigration services without being qualified to do so from July 2016 through...


July 24, 2018
AG Ferguson investigation leads to Facebook making nationwide changes to prohibit discriminatory advertisements on its platform

SEATTLE — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced that Facebook signed a legally binding agreement with his office to make significant changes to its advertising platform by removing the ability of third-party advertisers to exclude ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, LGBTQ individuals and other protected groups from seeing their ads. The agreement requires Facebook to make these changes within 90 days. The impacts will be nationwide. This agreement is legally binding in Washington state. Facebook will change its platform nationwide.

This action concludes a 20-month investigation by the Washington State Attorney General’s Office that began after nonprofit ProPublica published an article on Facebook’s advertisement targeting.

“Facebook’s advertising platform allowed unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, sexual orientation, disability and religion,” said Ferguson. “That’s wrong, illegal, and unfair.”

The assurance of discontinuance, filed in King County Superior Court, resolves the Attorney General’s investigation into whether targeting options for advertisements on Facebook’s platforms constituted unfair...


WEST VIRGINIA

July 31, 2018
Attorney General Morrisey Sues Harrison County Contractor

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey filed suit alleging a Harrison
County contractor accepted down payments for awnings and other home improvements that were never installed.

The lawsuit alleges Vision Home Improvements, its operator and two senior assistants deceived consumers, sanctioned fraud and were unified in executing a scheme of false promises that involved awnings, windows, fire pits and other projects.

“Our law demands that contractors act in a fair and trustworthy manner,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Any conduct to the contrary jeopardizes consumer protection. Our office is committed to ensuring contractors act responsibly and comply with terms set forth in their contracts.”

The Attorney General seeks a temporary court order to prohibit Vision Home Improvement and its associates, all based in Clarksburg, from soliciting new business during the course of the state’s litigation.

The lawsuit centers on Vision Home Improvement’s marketing of brand-name awnings. It alleges Vision...


Multistate Cases

Additional States Join Multistate Settlement with Citibank for Manipulating LIBOR


See also June Report, $100 Million Multistate Settlement with Citibank for Manipulating LIBOR, page 39 of PDF or this list of articles.

AGs Join Coalition to Block Attempt to Undermine Affordable Care Act

AGs File Suit to Prevent Distribution of Files for 3-D Printed Firearms


   https://portal.ct.gov/AG/Press-


AGs Ask US Court of Appeals to rule CFPB structure unconstitutional


Medicaid Fraud

Additional States Joined in Settlement Against Alere Inc.


CONNECTICUT

July 10, 2018

State Reaches False Claims Act Settlement with Norwich Behavioral Health Practice

A Norwich behavioral health practice and its co-owners, a mother and her daughter who are both licensed behavioral health clinicians, have agreed to a $300,000 settlement to resolve alleged violations of Connecticut’s False Claims Act, Attorney General George Jepsen and state Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby said today. Affinity Behavioral Health LLC ("Affinity") is co-owned by Julie Longton, a licensed marital and family therapist, and her daughter, Leanda Zupka, a licensed clinical social worker. Affinity, Longton and Zupka are enrolled as behavioral health providers in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP), which includes the state’s Medicaid program. The state alleged that, from April 2013 to December 2016, Affinity, Longton and Zupka knowingly submitted claims to the CMAP for payment for behavioral health services purportedly performed by licensed behavioral health clinicians when, in fact, the services were rendered by unlicensed individuals employed by Longton and Zupka. ...

July 03, 2018

Conn. Enters Joint State-Federal False Claims Act Settlement with Waterford Behavioral Health Provider

The state and federal governments have reached a joint settlement resolving allegations that a Waterford psychologist submitted false claims for behavioral health services she never provided to her Connecticut Medicaid patients, Attorney General George Jepsen and Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby said today. Dr. Arlene Werner, a licensed psychologist and owner and sole practitioner of a private psychology practice, will pay $126,760.09 and has been suspended from participation in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP) – which includes the state’s Medicaid program – for a period of two years.

The state and federal governments alleged that, from January 2011 to July 2016, Dr. Werner submitted false claims to the CMAP for psychotherapy services that were not provided to her CMAP patients. ...


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FLORIDA

July 18, 2018

Miami-Dade Man Arrested for Defrauding Medicaid

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Control Unit and the Miami-Dade Police Department today arrested a Miami man for defrauding the Medicaid program. According to the investigation, Armando Gonzalez, 57, worked as a targeted case manager at New Beginning Case Management Agency, LLC., located in the City of Hialeah. As a targeted case manager, Gonzalez assisted Medicaid recipients in gaining access to needed educational, medical, and social services—with the goal to optimize the functioning of patients with complex needs. Unfortunately, the defendant cataclysmically neglected to do preform these duties in the best interest of Medicaid recipients.

As a case manager, Gonzalez managed the facilitation of specific treatment plans for appropriate care and service to patients. Gonzalez is alleged to have created fraudulent progress notes in patients’ files to make it appear that he rendered services to Medicaid recipients.

The MFCU began investigating the agency after receiving a complaint by an anonymous...

KANSAS
July 10, 2018
AG Derek Schmidt charges six with, related crimes in national sweep
TOPEKA – (July 10, 2018) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt today announced that his office has charged six individuals with and/or related charges as part of a nationwide enforcement action led by the U.S. Department of Justice.
The charges against the six individuals allege losses to the Kansas Medicaid program totaling more than $90,000 in false billings. The cases filed were as follows:
State v. Lindsey Gill and State v. Dorothy Gill; Lyon County Case Nos. 18-CR-264 and 18-CR-265; Each charged with possession with intent to distribute, possession of a controlled substance, forgery, unlawful distribution of a controlled substance using a telecommunication device, unlawfully obtaining a prescription only drug, and theft. ...


KENTUCKY
July 12, 2018
Beshear: Jefferson County Man Caught Stealing from State Medicaid Program
FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 12, 2018) – After submitting false timesheets to the Kentucky Medical Assistance Program, a Jefferson County man entered a guilty plea to felony charges of and theft by unlawful taking, Attorney General Andy Beshear announced today.
At sentencing Tuesday, Charles Alexander, 54, of Louisville, paid more than $24,400 in restitution to the state and received a five-year sentence for two Class D felony charges, one count of Kentucky Medical Assistance Program Fraud of $300 or more; and theft by unlawful taking over $500, which will be diverted for a period of three years. If Alexander violates the terms of diversion he could risk serving five years in prison.
In April 2016, Alexander was indicted by a Jefferson County grand jury. The indictment claimed Alexander presented timesheets alleging care was being provided for a Medicaid recipient when other records indicated that care could not have been provided during...

MARYLAND

July 10, 2018

Frostburg Woman, Sister Plead Guilty to $825,000

BALTIMORE, MD (July 10, 2018)–Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that Rebecca D. Norris, 43, of Frostburg, pleaded guilty to one count of Felony for masterminding a series of fraudulent schemes at two western Maryland clinics she owned, resulting in a $825,000 loss to the Maryland Medicaid program. Norris’s sister, Heidi M. Wiley, 32, also pleaded guilty to one count of Felony for her role as a biller in Norris’ schemes. Both women will be sentenced by a Baltimore City Circuit Court judge on September 24, 2018.

According to information presented in court, Norris owned the Appalachian Wellness Centers in Cumberland and Westernport, which provided mental health, primary care and medication management services to individuals in Allegheny County and surrounding areas. Beginning in 2010, Norris either participated in or directed the following schemes ...


NEVADA

July 25, 2018

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Group Home Caregiver

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced today that Cesar Caruncho, 51, was sentenced for Neglect of an Older Person, a gross misdemeanor offense. District Court Ronald Israel sentenced Caruncho to 179 days incarceration (suspended), pay $2,000 in enforcement costs, perform 100 hours of community service, and placed him on probation for 3 years. The crime occurred during January 2016.

“This office has an obligation to protect our elderly citizens whenever possible and to ensure they are receiving proper care and attention,” said Laxalt. “Prosecuting these cases promotes safe living environments in medical facilities for our elderly.”

The investigation began after the Control Unit (MFCU) received information from the Bureau of Healthcare Quality and Compliance (BHCQC) of possible neglect happening at Las Vegas Alzheimer and Memory Care (LVAMC). The investigation revealed that Caruncho, who was a caregiver at LVAMC, did fail to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or ...

NEW HAMPSHIRE

July 20, 2018

Jerry Newton Convicted of Financial Exploitation of an Elderly Adult

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announces that Jerry Newton, age 54, of Hillsborough, was found guilty by a Hillsborough County Superior Court (Northern District) jury yesterday on 3 counts of financial exploitation of an elderly adult, in violation of RSA 631:9 and RSA 631:10. The jury acquitted Mr. Newton of 1 count of financial exploitation of an elderly adult.

In July 2016, the Control Unit (MFCU) received a referral from the New Hampshire Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, which alleged that Mr. Newton financially exploited his mother by unlawfully taking money from her and using it for his own benefit. An investigation conducted by the MFCU revealed that, while serving as agent under his mother’s power of attorney and trustee under a family trust, he took more than $300,000 for his own benefit.

As a result of the investigation, Mr. Newton was indicted on 4 Class A Felony counts...


NEW YORK

July 26, 2018

A.G. Underwood Announces Guilty Pleas Of Transportation Company, Corporate President, And Company Driver For Stealing Over $1.2 Million In Case

BUFFALO – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood today announced the guilty pleas of 716 Transportation, Inc. of Tonawanda, NY; its President, Wossen Ambaye; and one of the company’s drivers, Haimid Thompson, for stealing over $1.2 million in a scheme.

716 Transportation, Inc., with offices at 49 Raintree Island in Tonawanda, pleaded guilty today to Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (a Class C felony). Company President Wossen Ambaye, 38, of Tonawanda, pleaded guilty to Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (a Class C felony). Both pleas were entered in State Supreme Court before Judge John Michalski.

“False reporting of medical transport costs New York taxpayers millions every year,” said Attorney General Underwood. “My office will continue to prosecute those who try to scam the system — critical to preserving Medicaid resources for the vulnerable New Yorkers who rely on them.” ...

July 20, 2018

A.G. Underwood And Comptroller DiNapoli Announce Jail Sentence For Queens Pharmacy Owner Who Stole Over $1.5 Million From Medicaid

NEW YORK – Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood and State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli announced today the sentencing of Arkady Goldin, 40, of Brooklyn, owner of Value Pharmacy, Inc. (“Value”), a pharmacy formerly located in Queens before re-locating to its current location in Lynbrook, NY, for defrauding the New York State Medicaid program out of $1.5 million.

Today, Acting Supreme Court Justice Barry Kron of Queens County Supreme Court sentenced Arkady Goldin to six months in jail, five years’ probation, and 200 hours of community service. Goldin and Value Pharmacy will be required to pay $1.5 million to New York State as restitution for the money stolen from Medicaid and an additional $1.5 million in financial penalties, for a total of $3 million. …


NORTH CAROLINA

July 05, 2018

Attorney General Josh Stein Announces Nearly $10 Million Settlement with Rotech over Medicare and Medicaid False Claims

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein announced today that North Carolina has settled with Rotech Healthcare Inc., a Florida-based respiratory equipment supplier, over civil allegations that Rotech knowingly submitted false claims for portable oxygen contents to Medicaid and Medicare. The settlement is joined by 22 other states and the federal government. The total settlement is $9.95 million, of which North Carolina will receive $43,671.23.

“Cheating Medicare and Medicaid means cheating the taxpayer,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue our work to keep fraud out of these important programs.”

Between 2009 and 2012, Rotech automatically billed Medicaid and Medicare for portable oxygen contents regardless of whether the beneficiaries used or needed portable oxygen and without obtaining the required proof of delivery. Rotech continued this practice despite knowing that it was submitting ineligible claims. …

OHIO

July 23, 2018

Attorney General Mike DeWine Statement on PBM Investigation

(COLUMBUS, OHIO)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today issued the following statement providing an update on his office’s investigation into the practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) who do business with Ohio agencies:

“Since the end of 2017, my office has been reviewing and investigating issues regarding PBMs and their contracts with Ohio agencies, such as the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, and our numerous pension systems. It is clear that the conduct by PBMs in these areas remains a major concern, and we anticipate that our investigation will result in major litigation against PBMs.

“In recent months, my office began the process of hiring outside counsel to assist our continuing civil investigation and to oversee potential litigation that may arise from it. We are close to finalizing a selection and expect to announce that soon. We will also continue our…


PENNSYLVANIA

July 13, 2018

Attorney General Shapiro Supports New PA Law Giving His Office Power to Prosecute Abuse of Elderly, Others

READING — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today praised a new Pennsylvania law expanding the authority of the Office of Attorney General to prosecute abuse and neglect of care-dependent persons in nursing homes and similar settings. Under prior state law, the Attorney General’s office only had power to prosecute neglect cases, not abuse.

“Prior to passing this new law, Pennsylvania law treated ‘neglect’ and ‘abuse’ differently,” Attorney General Josh Shapiro explained today in Reading, where he stood with members of his Control Section, Rep. Jim Cox (R-Berks/Lancaster) and Berks County Area Agency on Aging Executive Director Dr. Edward B. Michalik. “Until now, my office only had jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute neglect of care-dependent persons. This new law gives us the law enforcement power we need to investigate and prosecute abuse as well. I want to thank Representative Cox, the General Assembly, and Governor Wolf. Act 53 will allow us…

SOUTH DAKOTA

July 16, 2018

Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division Joins SHIINE and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to Kick-Off Arrival of New Medicare Cards

PIERRE, S.D. – This week the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Office will join SHIINE and Medicare & Medicaid Services Representatives to discuss the mailing of new Medicare cards to 170,000 South Dakota residents. The new cards have started to arrive in local mailboxes in South Dakota. Social Security numbers have been removed from them to prevent identity theft against seniors, keep scammers from using Medicare benefits illegally, and protect tax dollars. The following two press events have been scheduled to discuss the new cards and how to avoid the scams associated with the distribution. ...


July 09, 2018

State Reaches Civil Settlement with Optometrist in Medicaid Case

PIERRE, S.D. - Attorney General Marty Jackley announced today that South Dakota has reached a civil Settlement Agreement and an Integrity Agreement with Melanie D. Weiss and Weiss EyeCare Clinic, P.C., of Watertown, SD, in a case involving Medicaid payments. Weiss will pay $25,869.15 to the State as part of the settlement agreement. The settlement funds will be used to reimburse taxpayers’ Medicaid expenditures. According to the settlement agreement, South Dakota contends that Weiss submitted at least some claims for payment for fundus photography services that were not medically necessary. The settlement agreement is neither an admission of liability by Weiss, nor a concession by South Dakota that its claims are not well founded. Weiss cooperated fully throughout the pendency of this case. The case was handled by the South Dakota Control Unit, with assistance from the South Dakota Department of Social Services, and the US Department of Health and Human...


TEXAS

July 02, 2018

AG Paxton’s Control Unit Collaborates on Multi-Agency Arrests of 12 Individuals in Houston-Area Health Care Fraud Takedown

Attorney General Ken Paxton today commended the Control Unit of his office for its role in the arrests of 12 Houston-area individuals as part of the largest health care fraud enforcement
action in American history.
Attorney General Paxton’s Control Unit – working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, local FBI, and the nationwide Medicare Fraud Strike Force – targeted the most egregious schemes involving the billing of Medicare and Medicaid private insurance programs for medically unnecessary services and prescription drugs, and violations of illegal kickbacks.
“I’m proud of the part our Control Unit played in this historic effort against health care fraud,” Attorney General Paxton said. “steals taxpayer money and jeopardizes care for some of Texas’ most vulnerable citizens. My office will continue to fight for the integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs to ensure Texans’ tax...


21. New Mexico - (2018-07-19) AG Balderas Joins FTC and 50 States to Combat Fraudulent Charities that Falsely Claim to Help Veterans and Service Members
22. New York - (2018-07-19) A.G. Underwood Announces Multistate Settlement With Military Charity For Failing To Properly Oversee Donations Made In Conjunction With National Retailer Harris Jewelry
   http://www.justicia.pr.gov/gobierno-de-puerto-rico-se-une-a-la-comision-federal-de-comercio-para-combatir-actuaciones-fraudulentas-de-organizaciones-beneficas-que-alegan-ofrecer-ayudas-a-veteranos/
   https://www.ri.gov/press/view/33765
27. South Carolina - (2018-07-19) SC Attorney General AlanWilson Joins FTC and 50 States to Combat Fraudulent Charities That Falsely Claim to Help Veterans and Service Members
   http://www.scag.gov/archives/36074
   https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/stop-veteran-charity-scams


AG Actions on Behalf of Students

States include:


Public Health & Safety in New Tobacco Rules

States include:


AGs Join in Fight Against Administration’s Title X Rule

States include:


https://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases18/pr20180731a.html


ARIZONA

July 31, 2018
Attorney General Reminds Consumers Restitution Is Available After Settlement with Bullhead City-Based Malows Jet Ski Rentals

BULLHEAD CITY – Attorney General Mark Brnovich wants to remind consumers they only have a few weeks left to file a complaint to obtain restitution from a consumer fraud lawsuit against Malows (Malow’s) Jet Ski Rentals, LLC.

In May 2018, the court approved a consent decree to resolve the Attorney General’s lawsuit against Malows Jet Ski Rentals, LLC and its manager, Mahriar Akbari. The settlement requires the defendants to pay $100,000 in restitution to consumers who overpaid the company when they rented watercraft.

The State’s complaint alleged that Malows advertised jet ski rentals for “$65 ALL DAY,” when in reality, Malows charged consumers up to $299 for jet ski rentals on Fridays, weekends, and holidays. The State also alleged the defendants overcharged consumers for gasoline, improperly retained consumers’ refundable deposits, and charged consumers for damage consumers did not cause. ...


July 30, 2018
Arizona Attorney General Brnovich Warns Consumers to Remain Vigilant Against Government Imposter Scams

PHOENIX -- Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich is warning consumers and businesses about government imposter scams that are continuing to make the rounds in Arizona. Recently, the Attorney General’s Office has seen an uptick in consumer complaints about scammers
pretending to be from the Social Security Administration. Government imposter scams have many different angles but typically involve a phone call, email, text message, or letter from someone claiming to be from a government agency. The scam artist states you owe the government money, will be arrested, or stand to lose government benefits or services. In order to rectify the situation, you must send money, buy and send gift cards, and/or provide personal information like your Social Security Number. In another variation of the scam, the government imposter states you have won money, or you are entitled to money from the government but need to pay “a fee.” These con artists may...


July 19, 2018
Travel Scams in Full Swing During Summer Months Precautionary Steps to be a Savvy Traveler

PHOENIX — With temperatures skyrocketing into triple digits, many Arizonans are scrambling to book getaways in cooler places to beat the heat. Before you book a hotel, Attorney General Mark Brnovich wants to warn consumers about the latest travel scams and how to avoid them. By following the tips below, Arizona consumers can stay safe, avoid the scams, and make the most of their vacations.

“Booking your travel arrangements through trusted sources, asking questions, and reading the fine print are the first steps in avoiding vacation nightmares,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Paying attention to the details when planning your trip can help keep your family safe and allow you to rest a little easier on the road.”

Some of the top tips include:

Watch out for bait and switch scams: With many third-party travel websites and online booking agents, it can be difficult to know who you’re dealing...


July 17, 2018
Online Romance Scam Victimizing Arizona Residents

PHOENIX — Attorney General Mark Brnovich is warning Arizonans to be wary of online romance scams after an investigation found Valley residents tried to wire thousands of dollars overseas. In this type of fraud, scammers take advantage of people looking for romantic partners on dating websites and social media. The fraudsters pretend to be romantically interested in their victims, only to lure them into sending money overseas. They will often claim they need money for medical expenses or travel costs.
The Arizona Attorney General’s Office recently conducted an investigation into online scams originating from Ghana, a hotbed for internet-based fraud. Officers identified numerous Arizonans who were victims of romance scams and other similar schemes. The victims were tricked into wiring money to scammers in Ghana through a money transmitting business. On May 21, 2018, the Arizona Attorney General Special Investigations Section and Financial Remedies Section obtained a seizure warrant, issued by the Maricopa...


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ARKANSAS

July 16, 2018

**Rutledge to Investigate Apartment Complexes**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced that she is demanding information and opened an investigation in response to events detailed in last week’s article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette about run-down apartment conditions at both Bella Vista Apartments and Pleasant Ridge Apartments in Little Rock.

“Landlords should want to maintain not only livable conditions in their facilities, but should ensure high quality housing opportunities for Arkansans,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “The reports given in last week’s newspaper are appalling and no one should be forced to live in unlivable conditions. I am seeking answers from both companies regarding their repair and maintenance practices at these and potentially other properties where Arkansans live and raise their children.”

It is the role of the Attorney General to investigate, research and analyze business practices and issues that affect consumer interests. The Attorney General is empowered to seek civil penalties, injunctive relief, suspension...


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CALIFORNIA

July 30, 2018

**Attorney General Becerra Issues Consumer Alert on Price Gouging Following State of Emergency in Lake, Mariposa, Mendocino and Napa Counties**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a consumer alert following the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency in Lake, Mariposa, Mendocino, and Napa Counties due to widespread natural disasters. Attorney General Becerra reminds all Californians that price gouging during a state of emergency is illegal under Penal Code Section
We are all grappling with the heartbreaking loss of life due to fires throughout the State. During this difficult time, it is imperative that we continue to look out for one another and remain vigilant of illegal price gouging,” said Attorney General Becerra. “It is appalling to think of businesses taking advantage of people by illegally raising prices at time when they face the most dire need for goods and services. I encourage anyone who has been the victim of price gouging, or who has information regarding potential price gouging, to immediately file a complaint through my...


July 27, 2018
Attorney General Becerra Issues Consumer Alert on Price Gouging Following State of Emergency in Riverside, Shasta, and San Bernardino Counties

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a consumer alert following the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency in Riverside, Shasta, and San Bernardino Counties due to widespread natural disasters. Attorney General Becerra reminds all Californians that price gouging during a state of emergency is illegal under Penal Code Section 396.

“Families in Riverside and Shasta Counties are dealing with serious, devastating wildfires in their communities while families in San Bernardino County are grappling with the significant damage caused by monsoon rainstorms. They should not have to worry about unscrupulous businesses trying to illegally cheat them out of fair prices,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Our State’s price gouging law protects people impacted by an emergency from illegal price gouging on housing, gas, food, and other essential supplies. I encourage anyone who has been the victim of price gouging, or who has information regarding potential price gouging, to immediately...


July 07, 2018
Attorney General Becerra Issues Consumer Alert on Price Gouging Following State of Emergency in San Diego, Santa Barbara and Siskiyou Counties

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a consumer alert following the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency in San Diego, Santa Barbara and Siskiyou Counties due to widespread wildfires. Attorney General Becerra reminds all Californians that price gouging during a state of emergency is illegal under Penal Code Section 396.
“Families in San Diego, Santa Barbara and Siskiyou Counties are rightly focused on remaining safe and secure. They should not have to worry about being cheated out of fair prices. Such exploitation isn’t just unethical—it’s against the law,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Our State’s price gouging law protects people impacted by an emergency from illegal price gouging on housing, gas, food, and other essential supplies. I encourage anyone who has been the victim of price gouging, or who has information regarding potential price gouging, to immediately file a complaint through my Office’s website or call (800) 952-5225,…


COLORADO

July 18, 2018
Attorney General Coffman and Colorado Springs Mayor Suthers Commend Walmart’s New Initiative to Combat the Opioid Epidemic

COLORADO SPRINGS- Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman and Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers today met with officials from Walmart and DisposeRx to receive a hands-on demonstration of an innovative new initiative to help curb the nation’s opioid abuse epidemic that Walmart is giving its pharmacy patients filling opioid prescriptions.
Walmart recently announced it would carry and distribute the opioid disposal solution, known as DisposeRx, in all of its 4,700 pharmacies nationwide, free of charge.[1] Additionally, pharmacists have been trained to help educate customers on how to safely and effectively use the product.
DisposeRx is a powder that when mixed with warm water in a pill bottle, creates a gel that can responsibly be thrown out with household trash.
Attorney General Coffman applauded Walmart’s efforts for taking the lead by being the first retail pharmacy in the nation to utilize the program. …


FLORIDA

July 16, 2018
Attorney General Bondi Recognizes Military Consumer Protection Month with Tips for Veterans and Service Members

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi is recognizing Military Consumer Protection Month with tips for active-duty military, veterans and their families. This year’s Military Consumer Protection Month is dedicated to raising awareness about scams targeting or harming those who serve our country. Floridians generously donate to military and veterans’ charities. However, not all charities are legitimate. Some solicit donations by falsely promising
to provide services to our military and veterans.
“I am honored that so many members of our Armed Forces and military veterans call Florida home. As a state, we need to do everything in our power to protect those who risk so much to protect us,” said Attorney General Bondi. “Last year we launched our Military and Veterans Assistance Program to provide additional resources to our brave service members, veterans and their families, and we will continue to do everything we can to make Florida the best state for our...


GEORGIA

July 31, 2018
Carr Reveals Georgia’s Top Consumer Complaints for 2017
ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced Georgia’s top consumer complaints for 2017. This announcement falls on the heels of the latest report from the annual survey of state and local consumer agencies conducted by Consumer Federation of America (CFA). Georgia was one of forty agencies from twenty-three states that participated in the survey. Participating entities were asked about the most common complaints, the fastest-growing complaints and the worst complaints received in 2017. In addition, the report identified new kinds of consumer problems, agencies’ greatest achievements and new laws enacted in the agencies’ jurisdictions last year to protect consumers.
“Part of our mission to protect consumers includes keeping them up-to-date on new trends in deceptive tactics,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “We hope Georgians will continue to heed the advice that our office distributes and contact us if they are confronted with malicious behavior in the marketplace.” ...


GUAM

July 25, 2018
Facebook Scam Targets AG as Victim of Identity Theft
July 25, 2018, Tamuning, Guam-Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson is one of the latest victims of a Facebook identity theft scam and warns citizens.
“Even an Attorney General is susceptible to identity theft. Fortunately, the people of Guam know who I am. Unfortunately, outside of Guam this scam might appear very enticing to victims looking to win fast money,” said Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson.
“We have reported the scam to FACEBOOK and requested that it be shut down immediately.
We have also informed the National Association of Attorneys General to be on the watch for similar scams. I plan to search my name more often on the Internet,” she said.


IOWA

July 09, 2018

JUUL and kids: Your ideas are needed

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller and the Advisory Group ask you to suggest ideas on how JUUL Labs can limit access to their e-cigarettes by minors.

In June, Miller convened a group of 14 officials, including former attorneys general and public health experts, to examine how JUUL can avoid the unintended consequences of attracting youth and non-smokers to e-cigarettes. The advisory group will meet several times this summer and create a set of recommendations for JUUL.

JUUL’s basic business plan is to sell to adult smokers and switch them completely to its product. JUUL has never wanted kids to use their product.

JUUL has taken several actions to address youth use, including:

- Requiring that people be 21 or older to purchase products on its own website. The ecommerce platform uses a three-way verification process to ensure minors are not able to purchase online;
- Supporting state and federal initiatives to raise the minimum purchase...


July 03, 2018

Miller cautions Iowa flood victims about fraud risks

DES MOINES – Iowans affected by recent flood damage should be wary of consumer scams and shady contractors who tend to solicit victims of natural disasters.

Consumers should be watchful for clean-up, home repair and construction contractors, especially those who seek business door-to-door and ask for advance payment.

Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation Monday for Boone, Dallas, Jasper and Polk counties in response to flooding and severe weather beginning June 14. State regulations make price gouging illegal for those counties where a disaster declaration is in effect.

Price gouging is defined in the Attorney General’s Administrative Rule as raising prices unreasonably above the price at which the merchandise or service was sold in the usual course of business immediately prior to the onset of the emergency. The rule, which applies during the emergency declaration and "subsequent recovery period" up to six months, recognizes that
prices may be higher because sellers also...


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**KANSAS**

July 31, 2018

**AG Derek Schmidt names former Allen County sheriff to lead fraud and elder abuse investigations**

TOPEKA – (July 31, 2018) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt today announced that he has named former Allen County Sheriff Thomas R. Williams to lead his office’s fraud and abuse investigations.

“Tom Williams has had a distinguished career in law enforcement, and I’m delighted he has agreed to continue his contributions to public safety by joining the Office of the Attorney General,” Schmidt said. “Tom’s wide range of experience will be a great asset to the attorney general’s office as we work to increase our capacity to investigate and prosecute cases of fraud and abuse, particularly when those crimes are committed against Kansas seniors.”

Williams served as sheriff of Allen County from 2005 to 2013, when he became an Allen County commissioner. He began his law enforcement career in his hometown with the Arkansas City Police Department. He then served 20 years in the Kansas Bureau of Investigation prior to being...


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**KENTUCKY**

July 27, 2018

**Beshear: Mobile Deposit Scam Leaves Victims Repaying the Bank**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 27, 2018) – A new scam warning was issued by Attorney General Andy Beshear today after a mobile deposit scam left a Franklin County resident with a $10,000 bank tab.

Beshear said reports from legitimate local banks and Kentuckians indicate scammers are succeeding in their efforts to put a new twist on the old counterfeit check scam.

“Falling victim to a counterfeit mobile deposit scam often results in the scammer getting away with the money and the victim repaying the bank,” said Beshear. “Before making or approving a bank deposit from an unverified source we recommend Kentuckians first confirm with a valid bank that it is not a scam.”

The latest scam report includes a victim who provided her online bank account information to what appeared to be a legitimate banking institution to deposit a $10,000 personal loan.
Shortly after, the “lender” claimed there was an issue and that the...


July 06, 2018
Beshear Issues Alert for Military Consumer Month
FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 6, 2018) – July is Military Consumer Month, and Attorney General Andy Beshear is warning veterans and military families to be on the lookout for the most common veteran-specific scams.
Beshear said the alert is part of his office’s “Mission Veterans Protected” (MVP) program aimed at helping Kentucky’s veteran community combat the findings in an AARP study where veterans are twice as likely to fall victim to fraud when compared to nonveterans.
“My office is currently working to help two widows of veterans who lost more than $43,000 to scammers pretending to be active duty soldiers,” Beshear said. “It is a disgrace that con artists target military families, and we are working to prevent these crimes by making sure Kentucky veterans, active duty service members, reservists and their families can identify the most common veteran-specific scams.”
Beshear said three of the top veteran-specific scams identified in the AARP study are:...

Original Press Release: https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=600

MICHIGAN
July 24, 2018
Schuette Reminds Residents about August 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 August. The Department of Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division offers a variety of programs throughout the month aimed at keeping Michigan consumers safe and up-to-date on the latest scams.
The August 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 signs of scams prevalent in phone calls, mail, email, and texts, along with steps to take to minimize your risk of being victimized.
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 an identity theft victim.
Online Safety - Learn how to protect your devices,...
July 10, 2018

**Schuette Releases New Consumer Alert to Warn Residents About New Text Messaging Scams called "Smishing"**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette announced his Consumer Protection team has released a new consumer alert on “Smishing.” Smishing is when a scammer sends text messages to consumers appearing to be from a trusted source.

Smishing scams are like phishing scams for emails except they arrive as text messages. The scammer’s goal is for consumers to respond to the texts with personal information or to click on links that install malware.

“Dishonest individuals are always trying to find new ways to obtain our personal information,” said Schuette. “My Consumer Protection team continually works to stay current on the latest scams, so they can make sure Michigan residents are aware of these scams and know how to identify the scams and avoid them.”

With more than 20 billion text messages sent every day in the United States, a growing number of those are from thieves trying to scam consumers. Smartphone users are...

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July 09, 2018

**Schuette Recognizes July as Military Consumer Protection Month, Reminds of Available Resources for Active Military Members and Veterans**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today recognized the month of July as National Military Consumer Protection Month to raise awareness about identity theft crimes affecting members of the military.

It serves as an opportunity to remind Michigan’s service members of consumer protection programs and helpful tips available specifically to address the needs of both active duty military and veterans, since July is designated Military Consumer Protection Month by the Federal Trade Commission.

“The men and women who dedicate their lives to serving and protecting our country deserve better than to be scammed by individuals that see nothing more than an opportunity to make money,” said Schuette. “My consumer protection division and charitable trust section are dedicated to protecting all Michigan residents, but especially those individuals who serve our country.”...
MISSISSIPPI
July 02, 2018

AG Hood Fights Legislation Protecting Abusive Lending Practices
Attorney General Jim Hood is urging Congressional leadership to vote against HR 3299 ("Protecting Consumers’ Access to Credit Act of 2017") and HR 4439 ("Modernizing Credit Opportunities Act"), two bills that would invalidate a state’s ability to protect consumers from high interest loans and undermine a state’s ability to enforce consumer protection laws. General Hood sent a letter to Congressional leaders last week with a bipartisan group of 20 other attorneys general expressing their opposition to the proposed legislation. As the attorneys general expressed in the letter, HR 3299 and HR 4439 would constitute a substantial expansion of the preemption of state usury laws, which have long been recognized as the purview of the individual states. Over decades, states have crafted laws that create a careful balance between the need for access to credit and the need to ensure that loans are offered on terms that do not create consumer harm.


MONTANA
July 12, 2018

Avoid Summer Repair Scams by Choosing Contractors Carefully
Home repair and improvement scams flourish in warm weather or in the days following natural disasters. With the recent storm in Eastern Montana, the Montana Department of Justice’s Office of Consumer Protection reminds Montanans of tips to keep in mind when selecting a contractor to do paving, roofing, or remodeling projects on their property.
“Become a well-informed consumer,” Attorney General Tim Fox said. “Be wary of drive-by contractors and storm chasers; learn more about the high pressure sales tactics they apply.
Taking a few minutes to learn some helpful tips from my Office of Consumer Protection can help you avoid being taken advantage of this summer,” Attorney General Fox added.
Tip-offs to fly-by-night paving or storm chasing repair swindles include individuals who:
• Refuse to provide a written estimate, contract or references;
• Offer very low bids;
• Use high-pressure sales tactics;
• Arrive in a vehicle that does not have a company name, address, or...

NEBRASKA

July 26, 2018

AGO Consumer Website Wins WAGGY Award

Lincoln—The Nebraska Attorney General’s Consumer Protection website (www.ProtectTheGoodLife.nebraska.gov) has received the 2018 Consumer Outreach WAGGY award at the annual Conference for Western Attorneys General (CWAG). This honor is given by CWAG to “the office that best demonstrates a commitment to providing valuable information to their state’s consumers.” The CWAG committee awarded the Nebraska Attorney General’s site based on its resources that aid a wide range of consumers as well as its easy-to-use design for reporting scams and other issues.

In announcing the award, it was said, “This state has done an exceptional job of educating their consumers and encouraging them to play a proactive role in both avoiding and reporting scams.”

In response to winning the award, Attorney General Peterson said, “Our website was created because we know from experience that Consumer education provides Nebraskans the strongest defense against falling prey to fraud, scam and identity theft.”


NEW JERSEY

July 02, 2018

NJ Consumer Affairs' Office of Weights and Measures Announces Results of “Operation Summer Octane” Fuel Quality Inspections Ahead of Busy July 4th Travel Week

NEWARK – Motorists traveling to New Jersey’s beaches, parks, and other spots to celebrate Fourth of July can fuel up with confidence thanks to a statewide inspection of gas stations to ensure consumers get what they pay for at the pumps during the busy holiday week, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs announced today.

“Operation Summer Octane,” a two-week campaign of unannounced fuel quality tests led by the Division’s Office of Weights and Measures (“OWM”) tested the quality of gasoline at 371 stations across New Jersey – about 10 percent of the 3,000 licensed stations in the state – and found only two allegedly selling fuel with octane levels lower than advertised.

“With the busiest travel holiday of the summer upon us, we want motorists to have confidence that when they purchase gasoline at New Jersey stations, they’re going to get their money’s worth,” said Paul R. Rodriguez, Acting Director of...

➤ Original Press Release: https://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases18/pr20180702a.html
NEW MEXICO
July 20, 2018
SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns of Scammers Pretending to be State Employees to Steal New Mexicans’ Cash
Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a scam alert, warning New Mexicans that scammers are calling from phone numbers with “New Mexico State Government” listed on caller ID, and trying to trick people into handing over their money.
“Scammers are getting very sneaky and sophisticated, and their techniques are increasingly difficult to detect,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “The most effective solution to the problem of encountering a scam call is simply to hang up.”
Tipsters reported to the NMAGO that they received calls from a (505) area code, a common Santa Fe prefix, and “New Mexico State Government” on the caller ID. When they answered the call, they received instructions to call a toll-free number, 1-800-847-2911. When tipsters called that number, they were connected to a purported “debt relief” company, “Credit Financial Solutions,” claiming to be in Orlando, Florida, and offering to reduce consumer credit card interest rates...

➢ Original Press Release:

July 10, 2018
AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans of Online Phishing Scam Targeting Their Bank Accounts
Albuquerque, NM– Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas cautioned New Mexico consumers not to submit their banking information over the internet—unless consumers have initiated contact with the bank. The advisory came after the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General received several reports of scammers receiving banking account numbers through ‘phishing’ for information on a banking website.
“New Mexicans need to be aware of potential scammers doing everything they can to take their hard-earned money,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “These scammers are getting better at disguising themselves every day and will stop at nothing in their attempts to get into New Mexicans’ wallets.”
In this situation, the fraudulent banking website created by scammers, displayed an alert that read “Security Alert: Suspicious Login Noticed.” The scammers attached a link near that alert, and consumers were asked to enter their bank information, passwords, debit card numbers and personal identification (PIN) numbers on the new...

➢ Original Press Release:
OHIO

July 31, 2018
Attorney General DeWine Offers Consumer Protection Tips for Sales Tax Holiday, Back-to-School Shopping

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—As consumers prepare for Ohio’s sales tax holiday and the upcoming school year, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine is offering consumer protection tips. Complaints about shopping (both in stores and online) are one of the most common types of complaints filed with the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section, which logged about 1,170 such complaints in 2017. Commonly reported problem areas include refund or return issues, billing issues, and claims of misrepresentation.

“We know many people will be shopping this weekend during the sales tax holiday, and we want to help them make the most of it,” Attorney General DeWine said. “It’s a good time to save money on clothes and other items, and there are things consumers can do help minimize the risk of problems.”

During the sales tax holiday, the following items are exempt from sales and use tax:
- Clothing priced at $75 per item or less;
- School supplies priced...


OKLAHOMA

July 27, 2018
Attorney General Hunter Comments on PSO’s Cancelation of the Wind Catcher Project

OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Mike Hunter today released the following statement after Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) announced it would no longer seek pre-approval from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) for its proposed Wind Catcher project.

The company’s decision to cancel the project comes a day after the Texas Public Utility Commission voted unanimously to deny the project. Texas commissioners said the project’s benefits were based on questionable assumptions and the benefits weren’t enough for Texas ratepayers.

“I commend the Texas Public Utility Commission for its sound and sensible ruling,” Attorney General Hunter said. “We have said from the beginning PSO failed on several fronts to qualify for pre-approval and cost recovery of this project, including its failure to comply with the OCC’s rules for competitive bidding, the inability to show a need for the generation capacity and unrealistic assumptions of ratepayer savings. …

PENNSYLVANIA
July 16, 2018
Attorney General Shapiro Demands Clarification from U.S. Attorney General Sessions and HHS Secretary Azar on Enforcement of Affordable Care Act
HARRISBURG – Today, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro sent a letter requesting clarification from United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions regarding the Trump Administration’s position on enforcing key provisions of the ACA, including protecting those with preexisting conditions and preventing discriminatory pricing. The letter from Attorney General Shapiro comes after contradictory statements were issued from the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regarding the constitutionality of certain ACA provisions and how the program would operate in 2019.

“Pennsylvanians need assurance now that the vital protections guaranteed under the ACA will not be taken from them,” wrote Shapiro. He goes on to say that in addition to the millions who have benefited from increased coverage, “up to 5.4 million Pennsylvanians with preexisting health conditions no longer worry about being denied coverage,” leading to the lowest uninsured rate for the Commonwealth on record. …


RHODE ISLAND
July 23, 2018
Attorney General Julius C. Michaelson Customer Service Center Opens in Pastore Complex in Cranston
Joined by members of the Michaelson family and friends, Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin officially opened the Attorney General Julius C. Michaelson Customer Service Center at a ribbon cutting ceremony earlier today.
Located at 4 Howard Avenue in the Pastore Complex in Cranston, the Attorney General's new facility will house the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI), Consumer Protection Unit (CPU), and Diversion Unit, as well as flexible office space for attorneys.
The building is officially named after former Attorney General Julius C. Michaelson, who was considered the architect of many customer service protection laws in Rhode Island and spearheaded one of the country's first Consumer Protection Divisions. Michaelson was first elected as Attorney General in 1974 and served two terms until 1979. …

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/33792
Attorney General Jackley Warns of Contractor Scams Following Summer Storms

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley is urging South Dakota residents to be vigilant of transient contractor scams following the severe weather the State has seen over the past couple of weeks.

“South Dakotans will want to quickly clean up and make repairs to damaged property,” said Jackley. “Whether you are working to fix damaged roofs, water damage in a basement, or hail dents we encourage consumers to take the extra time to evaluate and secure the right contractor to avoid becoming a victim of a scam.”

Here are a few suggestions when choosing professional contactors ...


AG Paxton Issues Consumer Alert on Misleading Homestead Tax Exemption Offers

Attorney General Ken Paxton today warned consumers to beware of businesses that are sending misleading letters to Texans offering a “designation of homestead” if they pay a fee. Counties make the standard homestead tax exemption available for free to property owners.

To date, the Consumer Protection Division of the attorney general’s office has received more than 100 complaints from individuals who received solicitations for these designations and, in some cases, sent back money for a homestead exemption.

“My office is actively reviewing all of the complaints and we will take whatever legal steps are necessary to stop unlawful activity by any company trying to take advantage of Texans,” Attorney General Paxton said. “I urge anyone who has received a solicitation offering a ‘designation of homestead’ that they believe is deceptive to please call my office’s consumer hotline at 800-621-0508 and report it.”

Texas consumers can also always report suspicious or fraudulent activity by...
#TBT: Stay Safe Online

As more and more of our lives take place online, guarding your safety and privacy is even more crucial. Today’s #TBT is a public service video AG Sean Reyes posted in January about pirate website dangers and how to avoid them.

Don’t be a victim. Guard your privacy. Be careful about the websites you visit, and warn your kids about how to stay safe online.

For tips on how you and your family can be more safe online, visit StaySafeOnline. You might pay particular attention to the Online Safety Basics page, and Secure Key Accounts and Devices. You should also click through the Parent Resources at NetSmartz.

Happy Thursday!

Original Press Release: https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/staysafeonline/

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UTAH

July 03, 2018

**UTAH@EASE: Connecting Veterans to Legal Services**

This week, the AG’s Office launched the UTAH@EASE initiative. This program will support military veterans, guardsmen, reservists, and active duty personnel. They put their lives on the line to support us, now we can give a little back by providing pro bono legal services in certain civil matters.

UTAH@EASE is a public/private partnership between the Utah Attorney General’s Office, Utah Department of Military and Veteran’s Affairs, and the Utah State Bar. The initiative was recognized in House Concurrent Resolution 13, sponsored by Representative Val Peterson and Senator Pete Knudson, and signed by Governor Herbert. You can watch the bill signing on our Facebook page.

If you or someone you know is a military veteran in need of legal support, please pass along the contact information below.

Larry Schmidt
UTAH@EASE Director
lschmidt@agutah.gov
385-227-9599

Our veterans will then be connected to local volunteer attorneys and firms.

Photo: James Motter on Unsplash

Original Press Release: https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/utah-at-ease/
VERMONT

July 23, 2018

Vermont Attorney General Advisory: New Recreational Marijuana Law Does Not Legalize Selling

The Vermont Attorney General’s Office is issuing this advisory to provide guidance and clarity to individuals and businesses about the scope of the law regarding the sale and gifting of marijuana.

Act 86 removes criminal penalties under Vermont law for adults 21 years of age or older who possess less than one ounce of marijuana or five grams of hashish. These individuals may also cultivate or grow up to two mature marijuana plants or up to four immature marijuana plants. Individuals may gift pursuant to the parameters set forth in the law.

Act 86 does not legalize the sale of marijuana. Any transfer of marijuana for money, barter, or other legal consideration remains illegal under Vermont law. This includes a commercial transaction (i.e., an exchange of goods or services for money) with a purported “gift” of marijuana. Examples include: selling an item or service, like a bracelet or t-shirt with the “gift”...


July 18, 2018

AG Donovan Requests Public Feedback On Rule Change Affecting Women’s And Reproductive Healthcare

Attorney General T.J. Donovan today announced the launch of a website to allow Vermonters to provide feedback on a proposed rule affecting clinics that receive Title X funds. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is writing new rules for recipients of Title X funding. Title X is the only nationwide program for affordable birth control and reproductive health care. The proposed rules would implement a “gag rule” on abortion referrals and redirect funding priorities from the CDC’s birth control recommendations to “natural family planning methods.” HHS is accepting public comments on the new rules until July 31. The AG’s website where the public can provide feedback is located at: http://ago.vermont.gov/act_now_for_reproductive_health/.

“Title X clinics provide essential health care to low-income Vermonters,” Attorney General Donovan said. “It’s critical that they continue. That’s why I’ve created a website for Vermonters to tell HHS that these rules are bad for Vermont.”

Vermont has...

July 10, 2018

**New Law Curbs Abuses by Credit Card Terminal Lessors**

A law to help small businesses, which was championed by Attorney General T.J. Donovan, went into effect on July 1. Act 4, “an Act relating to regulating finance leases for credit card terminals,” regulates leases of credit card terminals to smaller merchants. These terminals often cost a few hundred dollars to purchase, but are leased for thousands of dollars by predatory finance leasing companies. The leases are not cancellable and extend for 4 years. Act 4 puts protections in place to curb unfair practices by finance leasing companies. Specifically, the new law will give small businesses more, and clearer, information about lease terms and will allow cancellation within 45 days of entering into a credit card equipment lease.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our communities,” Attorney General Donovan said. “They deserve an equal playing field, and this law will help. I want to particularly thank the consumers who called our...


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**WEST VIRGINIA**

July 09, 2018

**Attorney General Morrisey Alerts Consumers to Social Security Scam**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey warned consumers to be wary of unsolicited calls from anyone claiming to represent the Social Security Administration. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division has received recent reports of impersonators using various excuses to steal Social Security numbers and other sensitive information.

The impostor will often ask consumers to verify personal information, including their Social Security number, to replace a Social Security card, fix an issue with their online account, process a cost-of-living adjustment or rectify benefits that have been underpaid and need adjustment. The impostors will sometimes even threaten legal action against consumers who do not comply.

“Impostors will use fear tactics to elicit compliance,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “It is very important that consumers not give in and make sure they are dealing with legitimate Social Security Administration representatives.”

Consumers should always verify any information by calling the legitimate Social Security...

Charleston — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey reminded consumers to put safety first when celebrating the upcoming Independence Day holiday.

Sparklers, ground spinners and aerial fireworks are a top pick for many families to kick off the Fourth of July. This has been especially true in recent years as an expansion in state law allowed retailers to sell a larger variety of fireworks beyond sparklers and ground-based entertainment.

“There’s nothing like celebrating our nation’s birthday with family, food and some spectacular fireworks,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Being aware of general safety tips can be the difference between a great holiday and a potential emergency.”

It is crucial to protect loved ones from accidents. In 2017, more than 12,900 fireworks-related injuries and eight such deaths occurred nationwide, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. ...

➢ **Original Press Release**: https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?e=5699e8e411&u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=d6c60421e0