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

ALABAMA

March 27, 2019

Alabama Attorney General’s Office, Banking Department, Securities Commission Sue Future Income Payments LLC for Activities Related to the Purported Purchase and Sale of Retirees’ Pensions

(MONTGOMERY) -- Attorney General Steve Marshall, Superintendent of the Alabama State Banking Department Michael E. Hill, and Director of the Alabama Securities Commission Joseph P. Borg, have sued Future Income Payments LLC (FIP), and its chief executive officer, Scott Alan Kohn, for alleged illegal activities related to its purported purchase of pensions. The lawsuit was filed March 20 in Montgomery County Circuit Court.

The Attorney General’s Office, Securities Commission and Banking Department are asking the court to issue an injunction to stop activities that they state are in violation of the Alabama Small Loan Act, the Alabama Consumer Credit Act, the Alabama Securities Act and the Alabama Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

“This company operated an illegal lending scheme that took advantage of vulnerable Alabama consumers by targeting the pension benefits that protect retirees from poverty and hardship,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Anyone who is still making payments to FIP is advised to...


ARIZONA

March 08, 2019

Attorney General's Office Recovers Full Restitution for Victims in “Toner Pirate” Case

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced today that his office obtained a consent judgment against INT Sourcing LLC, Premiere Office Supplies LLC, Elite Office Supplies LLC, and their owner, resolving allegations that the Defendants ran a “toner pirate” scam that sent fake toner cartridge invoices to churches, schools, and businesses. The State alleged that victim businesses frequently paid these deceptive invoices as a routine business matter. The judgment requires Defendants to pay over a half-million dollars, including $419,640.56 in restitution to fully refund all businesses that responded to the invoices.

“Every business that sent money in response to these fake invoices will have the opportunity to receive a full refund,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Scamming consumers, whether individuals or businesses, will not be tolerated by my office. Small business owners need to be
on the lookout of these scam invoice mailers and do research and ask questions before...


March 05, 2019

AG Brnovich Announces Consumer Fraud Lawsuit Against CashCall

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich filed a civil lawsuit against CashCall, Inc., its owner, J. Paul Reddam, and a wholly owned subsidiary, WS Funding LLC, for alleged violations of the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act.

The State alleges the defendants participated in a coordinated scheme to market, fund, service, and collect payments on high-interest, illegal loans to Arizona consumers utilizing a sham loan program that disguised the fact that the loans were void under Arizona law and violated Arizona usury laws.

“My office is committed to protecting Arizona consumers from deceptive lending practices,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “While every week is consumer protection week at the Arizona Attorney General’s Office, this filing underscores my office’s continued fight and vigilance to hold companies accountable for unlawful practices perpetrated against Arizona consumers.”

The complaint alleges that CashCall unlawfully collected millions of dollars from Arizona consumers through its lending scheme, which featured interest ranging...


ARKANSAS

March 14, 2019

Rutledge Announces Over $300,000 Restitution for Social Security Fraud

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced a Conway County man has been sentenced to probation and to pay more than $300,000 in restitution for social security fraud.

Joseph Sensabaugh, 47, from Hattieville, pleaded guilty in October to one count of theft of government funds. He has been sentenced to 18 months probation and ordered to pay $311,813 in restitution to the Social Security Administration, as well as a $100 special assessment fee.

“Social Security fraud on the backs of hardworking taxpayers is unacceptable,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “This case was the result of outstanding coordination between multiple state and federal agencies.”

In addition to the Attorney General’s office, law enforcement officers from the SSA-OIG, Conway County Sheriff’s Department and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
contributed to the investigation initiated by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and led by the Social Security Administration’s – Office of the...


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CALIFORNIA

March 15, 2019

**Attorney General Becerra Secures Early Victory in Protecting Patients and Competition Against Over-Consolidation in Sutter Health Lawsuit**

SACRAMENTO – On March 14, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra secured an important, early legal victory in UEBT and the State of California et al. v. Sutter. The Superior Court of San Francisco denied Sutter’s motion to eliminate claims alleging price tampering and combination to monopolize. Sutter Health is the largest hospital system in Northern California. “Yesterday’s court ruling is a giant step in the right direction,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Hospitals that participate in anticompetitive practices to the detriment of their patients must be held accountable.”

Sutter Health consists of at least 24 acute care hospital facilities, 31 ambulatory surgery centers, nine cancer centers, six specialty care centers, nine major physician organizations, 8,200 physicians and 48,000 employees located in 19 counties in Northern California. Attorney General Becerra filed his lawsuit against Sutter Health in March 2018. The complaint alleges that Sutter engages in anticompetitive practices that result in higher healthcare...


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March 04, 2019

**Attorney General Becerra Applauds Court Decision to Advance Challenge to U.S. Department of Education’s Failure to Discharge Borrower Defense Claims**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement on the U.S. District Court’s refusal to dismiss California’s lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education over its failure to discharge the loans of former students from for-profit and now-defunct Corinthian Colleges, Inc. (Corinthian). Attorney General Becerra sued the Department of Education in 2017 for failing to process debt-relief claims submitted by tens of thousands of students who took out federal student loans to attend Corinthian. Students became eligible to apply for this relief after the courts and the Obama-era Department of Education found that Corinthian defrauded these students in violation of California consumer protection laws. These findings were based in large part on investigative work conducted by the California Attorney General’s Office. More than one in four of those students with pending debt relief claims resided in California.
“We applaud this decision denying the Department of Education’s attempt...


COLORADO
March 14, 2019
Attorney General Phil Weiser Obtains Permanent Injunction and $4.5 Million Judgment Against Denver Custom Food Trucks Owners
Mar. 14, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) — A Denver District Court judge today ordered the owners of Denver Custom Food Trucks to pay $4.5 million dollars to resolve a case in which they took thousands of dollars from clients to build custom food trucks that were either never delivered or equipped with unsafe, fraudulent parts.

The Defendants, Larry Perez and Rudy Martinez, are required to pay $3 million and $1.5 million, respectively. According to witnesses, the food trucks that were eventually delivered by the Defendants frequently failed safety inspections from the Denver Fire Department, thus shifting more costs and delays onto the customers. Additionally, neither Perez nor Martinez held a motor vehicle dealer’s license as legally required to sell trucks. Defendants also often “skipped title” to deliberately avoid government oversight, causing further injury to consumers when they attempted to register their trucks as required by law.

“It is wrong to prey on and...


CONNECTICUT
March 20, 2019
STATE ANNOUNCES THIRD EXTENSION OF AMPHASTAR REBATES FOR NALOXONE PURCHASES
Governor Ned Lamont and Attorney General William Tong today announced the third extension of a rebate agreement with California drug-manufacturer Amphastar Pharmaceuticals, Inc. for the purchase of naloxone by the State of Connecticut or local municipalities and town agencies. The two-year agreement will extend the $6 rebate on every purchase of naloxone—also known by the brand name Narcan.

The rebate agreement was first entered into in 2016, and to date has saved the state and municipalities approximately $150,000.

“Addiction is a disease that impacts people of every background — it does not discriminate based on income, education, age, race, gender, or anything else,” said Governor Lamont. “We want to increase access to this life-saving medication, to continue helping people overcome this disease and hopefully get on a path of recovery.”

"Naloxone saves lives and we must do all we can to ensure its availability. Since 2016, this
rebate agreement has saved approximately $150,000—small,...


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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

March 15, 2019

**AG Racine Sues Maryland Man for Fraudulently Charging Local Adult Soccer League $120K in Rental Fees to Use DCPS-Owned Sports Fields**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has intervened in a lawsuit against a Maryland resident for fraudulently charging a local adult soccer league to rent D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) athletic fields and then pocketing the money. The suit alleges that, between 2009 and 2013, Larry Washington and two of his companies took more than $120,000 in rental payments from the Washington International Soccer League (WISL), failing to remit any of the money to DCPS. The suit was originally brought by WISL under the whistleblower provisions of the District’s False Claims Act. OAG’s complaint in intervention seeks damages and penalties that could amount to more than $370,000.

“The purpose of this lawsuit is to hold Mr. Washington accountable for fraudulently pocketing funds that rightly belong to DCPS,” said AG Racine. “We are also warning others that cheating the District...


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**FLORIDA**

March 28, 2019

**Attorney General Moody Continues to Combat Fraudulent Veterans Charities**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody, along with the Federal Trade Commission, took action in federal court against a Sarasota-based veterans charity, American Veterans Foundation, Inc. and its founder, Paul K. Monville signed an order agreeing to a permanent ban against soliciting charitable donations or participating in oversight and management of charities in the future. According to the complaint, filed at the same time as the settlement agreement, AVF raised approximately $6.5 million between 2014 and 2017 from donors nationwide based on misleading promises that donations would assist veterans. Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This fraudulent charity took in millions of dollars from generous donors who believed the funds would go to active military members and veterans. Deceiving donors by exploiting the brave men and women who protect our country is disgraceful. My office will work to ensure that any recovered money from this sham charity will
go to legitimate organizations helping...

- Original Press Release:
  http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/BE4BB62605BA6788852583CB005F59D

March 25, 2019
**Attorney General Moody Asks Court to Shut Down Diploma Mill**
TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today filed a court action in Hillsborough County to shut down a Florida diploma mill. The action stems from complaints against Ellenwood Academy, LLC for deceptive marketing of illegitimate high school diplomas to consumers in Florida and nationwide. The organization allegedly charges consumers $195 to enroll in a high school program and take an exam but does not employ any faculty or provide any instruction for consumers. Ellenwood diplomas are not accepted for admission to any school in Florida’s State University System.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “There are no shortcuts to success, yet diploma mills continue to falsely market easy alternatives to the hard work it takes to earn an education. Students often enroll with the goal of obtaining a diploma to advance their careers, but often leave with a worthless piece of paper. Anyone who encounters a diploma mill should report it to my...

- Original Press Release:
  http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/9571AF8CB1CCF417852583C800544708

March 13, 2019
**Florida Helps Secure Multimillion Recovery Following Health Care Fraud Investigation**
TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Office helped secure a multimillion-dollar recovery following an investigation into a multistate health care fraud scheme. Covidien LP, a former global health care products company, allegedly provided free or discounted development and marketing services to Florida health care providers to induce them into purchasing Covidien products. These alleged actions violate the Anti-Kickback Statute and both federal and state false claims acts.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Our office is committed to fighting fraud, including any attempt to manipulate Florida’s health care market. This multimillion-dollar recovery is just one example of how our Medicaid Fraud Control Unit attorneys and investigators work across boundaries and jurisdictions to protect the integrity of Florida’s health care system.”

According to the multistate investigation, Covidien used customized marketing plans to entice health care providers to purchase ClosureFASTtm catheters, used in procedures that treat venous reflux disease. The disease is often marked by the...
March 06, 2019

**Attorney General Moody Takes Action to Shutdown Imposter Scam**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—This National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Floridians to be aware of imposter scams. Attorney General Moody’s Consumer Protection Division is also taking action to stop an imposter scam targeting Florida businesses. The division today filed a complaint against two Michigan brothers operating an imposter scam in Florida. According to the complaint, Joe and Steven Fata sent misleading solicitations appearing to originate from state government agencies to Florida businesses. The brothers posed as representatives of state agencies and offered what appeared to be government services for a fee.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This imposter scam involved people posing as government agency representatives in an effort to trick business owners into purchasing public documents and services that are often available for much lower fees. We are also seeing an increase in reports of fraudsters pretending to be with the IRS, local utility companies and even law...

March 05, 2019

**Attorney General Moody Takes Action to Stop Roofing Scam**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Consumer Protection Division today filed a complaint against a Jacksonville construction company for scamming Floridians in need of roofing repairs. The complaint alleges that Kinnecorps, LLC, and manager, Roger Van Den Bosch, Jr., violated Florida’s Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act by taking money from consumers for roofing construction and then failing to finish the work. Many of the consumers victimized by this deceptive behavior include senior citizens and Floridians whose property suffered hurricane damage.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Our Consumer Protection Division is taking action against a shady roofing company scamming seniors and hurricane victims in Florida. We will not tolerate unscrupulous contractors preying on Floridians, especially our seniors and those trying to recover from hurricanes.”

The complaint alleges that the defendants violated the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act by:
· Soliciting roofing jobs from homeowners when the defendants lacked the funds to begin...

➢ Original Press Release:
   AA9

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ILLINOIS

March 19, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUl SUES LOMBARD VETERANS CHARITY FOR MISAPPROPRIATED FUNDS

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul filed a lawsuit against the Lombard-based charity Veterans Christian Network, Inc. (VCN) and its founders, Todd and Priscilla Olshefski, alleging that the Olshefskis misappropriated more than $10,000 from the charity.

Raoul’s lawsuit was filed Friday in Cook County Circuit Court against the Olshefskis and three other VCN directors. The lawsuit alleges the Olshefskis and VCN’s other directors, including Harlin Neal and Robert Atkinson misused the charity’s funds that were intended to support services for returning veterans. Raoul also said Todd Olshefski has a criminal history involving fraud or theft.

According to Raoul’s complaint, the Olshefskis formed VCN in March 2018, which is when they began soliciting donations to support programs for veterans returning from combat. Raoul alleges VCN failed to register with the Attorney General’s office as required by law and failed to file the statutorily-required reports accounting for VCN’s charitable activities. An investigation by Raoul’s...

➢ Original Press Release:
   http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2019_03/20190319.html

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March 05, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUl SUES TAX PREPAREDERS FOR FRAUD

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced a lawsuit to immediately shut down a tax preparation business operating in the south side of Chicago that collected more than $1 million in fees from consumers as a result of unlawful conduct.

Attorney General Raoul filed the lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court to shut down Nu Republic, a Georgia-based company, and its Chicago operators. Nu Republic has had several locations including 7900 S. Drexel Avenue, 644 E. 79th Street, and 1703 W. 79th Street. Raoul also filed a motion for a temporary restraining order to require Nu Republic to immediately cease operations and prohibit the company from offering tax preparation services while the lawsuit is ongoing.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit alleged Nu Republic and its sister company Refund Republic advertise that by filing their taxes with Nu Republic and paying a fee of approximately $350,
consumers can double their tax refunds or obtain...


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**IOWA**

March 15, 2019

**Miller sues to stop Iowa-based ‘puppy laundering’ ring**

DES MOINES — Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller filed a lawsuit Monday to shut down an alleged puppy-laundering ring, including dissolving two “pet rescue” non-profits accused of exporting designer dogs from Iowa to pet shops in other states.

The petition in equity filed in Polk County District Court alleges that one of the non-profits, Hobo K9 Rescue of Britt, sold at least 1,290 puppies to eight different entities in California, Illinois, Florida and New Jersey, from September 2016 to July 2018. The puppies — including Pomeranians, Shar-Peis, Alaskan Malamutes, Poodle-Yorkies and other breeds — were allegedly sold for $714,510.

Puppy laundering is the practice of using non-profit rescue groups to obscure the source of dogs, deceive consumers and circumvent “puppy mill” bans. California and Chicago, for example, have banned the commercial sale of some pets obtained from sources other than animal control shelters or rescue groups.

“No matter where they live, consumers should...


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**KANSAS**

March 26, 2019

**AG Derek Schmidt: Leawood man temporarily banned from conducting autopsies in Kansas**

TOPEKA – (March 26, 2019) – A Leawood man has been temporarily banned by court order from conducting autopsies in Kansas while a civil lawsuit alleging violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act and Kansas False Claims Act is pending, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

Shawn Parcells, 37, of Leawood, and his affiliated companies are temporarily banned from doing business in Kansas. Shawnee County District Judge Franklin Theis yesterday entered a temporary restraining order in Shawnee County District Court prohibiting Parcells and his affiliated companies from conducting autopsies, forensic pathology and tissue recovery in the State of Kansas until and upon resolution of the case.

The civil lawsuit filed by the attorney general alleges 14 violations of the Kansas False Claims Act and violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act involving three consumers. The
petition alleges Parcells contracted with Wabaunsee County to conduct coroner-ordered autopsies and failed to complete...


March 18, 2019
AG Derek Schmidt: U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear Kansas appeal in identity theft cases
TOPEKA – (March 18, 2019) – The U.S. Supreme Court today agreed to hear an appeal by the State of Kansas which is seeking to overturn a state supreme court decision that would prevent Kansas from fully enforcing state identity theft and related criminal statutes, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

The U.S. Supreme Court today granted the attorney general’s request to review three 2017 decisions by the Kansas Supreme Court, which held that, in certain situations, state criminal laws against identity theft and related crimes are preempted by federal immigration law.

“I am encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to hear our appeal,” Schmidt said. “We remain convinced Congress did not intend to block Kansas from prosecuting defendants for falsifying state tax forms or private legal documents merely because the defendant also falsified federal employment verification forms. We look forward to arguing our case before the Justices in the...


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KENTUCKY

March 28, 2019
Beshear: Florida Lottery Scammers Arrested, Ordered to Repay Kentucky Victim more than $104,000
LOUISVILLE, Ky. (March 28, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today announced two Florida men pleaded guilty to theft and exploitation charges after using a lottery phone scam to con a Louisville woman out of more than $104,000.

Manfred Sinclair, 40, and Rony Meza, 50, both of Miami, Florida, were sentenced and ordered to pay restitution to the victim this week in Jefferson Circuit Court.

The defendants admitted to carrying out a seven-month phone scam that led an 81-year-old victim to believe she won a $7.5 million lottery and needed to send tax money to claim her prize. Sinclair and Meza collected at least four checks via mail from the victim between October 2015 and April 2016.

“This case was brought forward thanks to the victim’s bank spotting red flags and reaching out to the Office of the Attorney General for assistance,” said Beshear. “Our investigators went to
work to track down these...


March 21, 2019

**Beshear Launches Investigation into Inflated Prescription Drug Prices**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 21, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear has launched an investigation into allegations that state pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) have overcharged the state health insurance programs for prescription drugs and discriminated against independent pharmacies.

Beshear is seeking details on how the PBMs, hired by state Medicaid managed-care organizations and the state employee health plan, have determined, billed and paid drug reimbursement rates over the past five years in Kentucky.

A report released last month by the state indicated two PBMs took in $123.5 million last year from the state Medicaid program by paying pharmacies a lower rate to fill prescriptions, while charging the state more for the same drugs.

Beshear said he is investigating PBMs because he wants to identify and recover any profits improperly retained at the expense of the Commonwealth and its taxpayers and ensure Kentucky families have affordable and accessible health care.

“I am demanding answers for Kentucky...


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**MASSACHUSETTS**

March 29, 2019

**AG Healey Secures $2 Million in Restitution for 20,000 Massachusetts Homeowners from National Mortgage Servicer**

Boston — One of the nation’s largest mortgage servicers will pay $2 million in restitution to resolve allegations that it violated state law and committed unfair and deceptive practices by charging Massachusetts homeowners for unnecessary fees and overpriced force-placed insurance policies, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The consent judgment, entered in Suffolk Superior Court, settles a lawsuit filed by the AG’s Office in April 2017 against Ocwen Loan Servicing LLC, which services tens of thousands of mortgages for Massachusetts homeowners.

“Keeping families in their homes remains a top priority for my office,” said AG Healey. “This settlement will provide relief to thousands of Massachusetts homeowners harmed by abusive and unfair mortgage servicing practices.”

The AG’s complaint alleged that Ocwen committed widespread mortgage servicing violations
that increased Massachusetts borrowers’ mortgage and insurance expenses, exposed borrowers to serious risk through insurance lapses, and contributed to loan delinquencies and foreclosures. When borrowers requested information about...


March 26, 2019

**News Sandwich Man Charged in Connection with Insurance Fraud Scheme**

Boston — The President and CEO of a Taunton insurance agency has been indicted in connection with an alleged embezzlement scheme that left client companies uninsured, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

David Pietro, age 63, of Sandwich, and his company, DGP Miles Insurance Agency of Taunton, were indicted yesterday by a Statewide Grand Jury on charges of Larceny over $250 (5 counts each). He will be arraigned in Bristol Superior Court at a later date.

The AG’s Office alleges that Pietro, a licensed insurance broker, collected insurance premiums from clients through DGP, and then failed to remit the premiums payments to their insurance carriers. As a result of the alleged embezzlement of these premiums, his client companies had various commercial insurance policies cancelled and were left uninsured.

In total, the AG’s Office alleges that Pietro stole $270,423.65 in premiums from client companies.

If any member of the public believes they may have been...


March 25, 2019

**Additional Indictments Issued in Greater Boston Real Estate Fraud Case**

Boston — Additional indictments have been issued against two men in connection with a scheme to defraud homeowners and mortgage lenders by providing fraudulent documents in legal and real estate transactions, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Allen Seymour, age 50, was indicted today by a Statewide Grand Jury on additional charges of Forgery (4 counts) and Larceny Over $1200. Seymour was previously indicted in December on other charges in connection with his alleged scheme.

Corey Seymour, age 26, of Worcester, who is Allen Seymour’s son, has also been indicted by a Statewide Grand Jury on Money Laundering (3 Counts), and Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering (1 count). He will be arraigned in Worcester Superior Court at a later date.

In addition to the previous allegations, the AG’s Office alleges that Allen Seymour forged additional signatures of residential homeowners in Cambridge, Somerville, and Brighton without their knowledge or consent. The AG’s Office further...
March 22, 2019

AG Healey Reaches $600,000 Settlement With Real Estate Company Over Allegations of Racial and Income Based Discrimination

BOSTON — A major property management company has agreed to pay $600,000, update its fair housing and leasing policies, and train its employees to settle allegations that the company systematically discriminated against applicants and tenants of a Malden apartment complex based on their race and whether they qualified for public assistance vouchers, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The assurance of discontinuance, filed March 7 in Suffolk Superior Court, settles allegations that Metropolitan Properties of America, Inc. (MPA) and its subsidiary MPA Granada Highlands, LLC (MPA Granada) violated fair housing, civil rights, and consumer protection laws through discriminatory leasing policies and practices in an effort to limit rentals at the Granada Highlands apartment complex – recently renamed Altitude Apartments – to minority and low-income tenants.

“Access to safe, affordable housing is critical to ensuring economic security for all residents of Massachusetts and their families,” AG Healey said. “Today’s settlement demonstrates my office’s...
check in the remaining two phases, which...


March 08, 2019

**AG Healey to DPU: Utilities Owe Customers $40 Million**

BOSTON — In a motion filed Thursday with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), Attorney General Maura Healey is urging the Department to reconsider its February 15, 2019 decision to deprive Massachusetts utility customers of approximately $40 million in tax savings that should be refunded to them by utility companies.

AG Healey’s motion is the latest in her office’s efforts to ensure that Massachusetts customers receive all the savings from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) which reduced the federal corporate tax rate from 35 to 21 percent. Before the TCJA went into effect, the AG’s Office called on the DPU to recalculate the distribution rates for all Massachusetts regulated utility companies to reflect the lower federal tax rate.

In June, the DPU ordered all utilities to reduce their rates going forward to reflect the federal tax savings. However, in its recent Feb.15 decision, the DPU decided...


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**MICHIGAN**

March 28, 2019

**MI AG Nessel Reaches Nearly $40,000 Settlement Agreement with Executive Car Rental**

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today announced her office reached a settlement agreement with metro Detroit-based Executive Car Rental. The settlement totals $39,500 and will be used to reimburse 55 consumers and department investigation costs. Of that settlement, the Better Business Bureau Serving Eastern Michigan will receive $4,000 for its assistance to the Department of the Attorney General in identifying consumers and the issues examined.

The settlement agreement made public today resolves the department’s investigation into the company’s apparent violations of the state’s Consumer Protection Act, including several complaints related to damage deposits of $250 or more that were allegedly not returned timely.

Nessel’s office began taking a closer look into the company in November 2018 after receiving a steady volume of complaints from Michigan and out-of-state consumers. Her office interviewed several of the complainants and obtained supplemental documentation that led to the notice of intended action.

“Businesses have...
March 14, 2019

**MI AG Dana Nessel Announces Start of Wells Fargo Consumer Compensation Review Program**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today announced that Wells Fargo has begun a consumer compensation review program so consumers who have not been made whole through other remediation programs already in place may seek to have an additional review by a Wells Fargo team for possible relief.

The consumer compensation review program was a key component of the $575 million settlement attorneys general from all 50 states and the District of Columbia entered into to resolve claims that the bank violated state consumer protection laws. Michigan’s share was $5,235,476.

“It’s important any and all Michiganders impacted by Wells Fargo’s actions are made whole,” Nessel said. “Our office will continue to look out for Michigan consumers’ interests and ensure the company delivers on its promises.”

The company was alleged to have:
- Opened millions of unauthorized accounts and enrolled customers into online banking services without their knowledge or consent;
- Improperly referred customers...

March 06, 2019

**AG Nessel Reopens Claims Process Against Snow Removal and Landscaping Businesses Operated by John and Michele Church**

LANSING – Citing disturbing new findings from the Better Business Bureau of Eastern Michigan (BBB), Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is re-opening the consumer claims process for individuals who believe they were victimized by Titan Seasonal Services and other snow removal and landscaping businesses owned and operated by John and Michele Church of Livonia.

The office of the Attorney General has received approximately 150 complaints against John and Michele Church’s businesses since 2010. And, since 2016, the BBB has received at least 30 complaints regarding just one of those businesses, Titan Seasonal Services. Those complaints involve failure to complete services, non-payment of subcontractors, and failure to timely refund customers for services not rendered, among others.

Last year, the Attorney General concluded a Consumer Protection Act investigation of Mr. and Mrs. Church and their businesses by entering into an assurance agreement that made money available for consumer refunds through a claims process....
MINNESOTA

March 07, 2019

**Attorney General Ellison seeks judgment in lawsuit against tech-support scam as part of nationwide crackdown on scammers**

March 7, 2019 (SAINT PAUL) — Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison announced at a press conference today that the Attorney General’s Office has moved for default judgment in a lawsuit against operators of Bloomington-based tech-support scam Teknicians, Inc., as part of a nationwide crackdown on scammers who try to trick consumers into buying costly tech support and repair services.

“Helping people afford their lives and live with dignity means helping people who’ve been victimized by sophisticated tech-support scams, and rooting out and holding accountable perpetrators who prey on consumers — especially our seniors. We’re doing all that and more to crack down on scammers and protect Minnesota consumers,” Attorney General Ellison said.

“But as we keep up this work, we need you to do two things to help: be alert, and come forward,” Attorney General Ellison continued. “Educate yourself and your loved ones about how tech-support scams operate, and be alert for...”

MISSISSIPPI

March 29, 2019

**Trial Begins Monday in Entergy Case**

The United States District Court will hear Attorney General Jim Hood’s case against Entergy beginning Monday, April 1, at 9:00 a.m. The case will be tried before District Judge Carlton Reeves. The State intends to prove the following at trial:

Entergy owes Mississippians approximately $1 billion. When a state grants an electric utility a monopoly, the company agrees to provide its customers power at the lowest reasonable cost available and to open its books. Entergy didn’t keep its promise and violated the Consumer Protection Act by refusing to buy the cheap electricity generated by newer, more efficient independent gas powered generators owned by its competitors, which drove them out of business. At the same time, Entergy sold its Mississippi ratepayers (almost a half million), including the state of Mississippi, the most expensive power generated from its old, antiquated electrical generating plants and purchased from its affiliates. Entergy’s actions made Mississippi a...
March 28, 2019

Madison Man Arrested for Stealing Money from Home Repair Customers

Robert Bates, 62, of Madison, was arrested at his home Thursday and charged with one count of home repair fraud, Attorney General Jim Hood announced. Bates allegedly stole over $40,000 from a victim who contracted with him for repairs to the victim’s home. Bates allegedly never started the work on the home and instead used the money for his own use. Hinds County Justice Court Judge Frank Sutton set Bates’ bond at $50,000. If convicted, Bates faces up to 10 years in prison and $10,000 in fines. A charge is merely an accusation, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. Additional charges are expected. If you believe you are a victim of Bates’, call the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 601-359-4230. The AG’s office has guidelines for home repair contracting, including a model contract, available on its website to...

March 08, 2019

AG Hood Requires Education Assessment Company to Strengthen Cybersecurity Measures after Data Breach

Attorney General Jim Hood announced today that he reached an agreement with Questar Assessment, Inc., a testing vendor, to strengthen their cybersecurity measures following an investigation into a data breach involving student information in North Mississippi. Questar Assessment, Inc. recently entered into an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC) with the State of Mississippi in which the company agreed to take certain steps to increase their cybersecurity. Between December 30, 2017, and January 1, 2018, an unknown person accessed Questar’s records from 2016 tests, which included student names and ID numbers, for 490 students at Tupelo Middle School, 72 at Tupelo High School, and 101 at Jefferson County Junior High. Questar notified the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) on January 19, 2018, and MDE and Questar worked together to notify students and their families. “While we don’t know why the hacker accessed the information, fortunately, so far, we do not have evidence that...
March 28, 2019

**AG Schmitt and the Federal Trade Commission Announce Settlement on Sham Charity**


Disabled Police and Sheriffs Foundation, and its founder, David Kenik, collected almost $10 million in donations from 2013 through 2017 allegedly to provide assistance to disabled officers and relief to families of officers killed in the line of duty. Instead, Mr. Kenik spent the vast majority of contributions to profit himself and private individuals he hired instead of on charitable programs.

“Cheating citizens out of money and personally profiting under the guise of helping disabled law enforcement is despicable. Make no mistake – if you seek to scam or defraud Missouri’s most vulnerable, we will bring you justice,” said AG Schmitt. “I’m grateful to have worked with the FTC and their talented team to bring David Kenik to...”


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March 25, 2019

**AG Schmitt Announces Guilty Plea of Webster County Contractor for Home Repair Fraud**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced today that James R. Butts, 31, pled guilty to unlawful merchandising practices in Pulaski County. In his plea, Butts admitted that he falsely promised a homeowner that, in exchange for $ 9,762 dollars, he and his company Marshfield Landscaping and Fence, LLC would order privacy fence materials and install a residential privacy fence for the homeowner. Despite being paid, Mr. Butts failed to provide any work or materials to the homeowner.

“Hiring a contractor and paying for construction can be a tricky process for homeowners, and scammers are continually looking for ways to take advantage of that confusion – that’s unacceptable,” said AG Schmitt. “My office always stands prepared to hold those who prey on Missouri homeowners accountable.”

As part of his plea, Mr. Butts paid back over $15,000 in restitution to the homeowner he defrauded as well as a second...


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March 18, 2019

**AG Schmitt Files Charges Against Moberly Man for Defrauding Food Bank Patrons**

Jefferson City, Mo. - Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced his office filed charges
in Boone County, Missouri against Kyle McClain of Moberly, Missouri for violating the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act. The four-count Felony Complaint alleges that McClain fraudulently sold insurance plans to patrons at Boone County food banks under the guise of helping them get a grant for dental work. However, eligibility for the grant did not require the purchase of McClain’s insurance or any insurance. The State alleges that McClain made intentional misrepresentations relating to the sale of the insurance and illegally profited from his fraudulent scheme.

“Preying upon Missourians who are seeking to get a meal at a food bank is unconscionable. While every individual is, of course, innocent until proven guilty, we are confident in our investigation and the charges we filed,” said Schmitt.

McClain has been arrested and has posted bond. His first scheduled Court...


March 07, 2019

AG Schmitt and the Federal Trade Commission Secure Record $30 Million in Sweepstakes Scam Case

Jefferson City, Mo. - The operators of a sweepstakes scam that appeared to target senior citizens have agreed to forfeit a record $30 million in cash and assets and will be permanently banned from the prize promotion business under a settlement secured by the Federal Trade Commission and the State of Missouri.

“Protecting our most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, is something that I dedicate myself to every single day,” said AG Schmitt. “With this record settlement, we sent a clear message to those who seek to perpetrate fraud within the State of Missouri: your actions will not go unpunished. I’m grateful for the opportunity to work with the Federal Trade Commission’s talented team to secure this settlement.”

“These defendants tricked millions of people—many of them older adults—into paying money to collect prizes that never materialized,” said Andrew Smith, Director of the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. “With our valued...


March 05, 2019

AG Schmitt Files Lawsuit Against Telemarketer Making Robocalls to Missouri Residents

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced that his office has filed suit against four Florida-based businesses, Health Advisors of America, Inc., Duff Insurance Brokerage Inc., America’s Best Insurance Group Inc., and Michael T Smith Insurance Inc., and their Presidents, Michael Smith Jr. and Zachary Cox, for violations of Missouri’s No-Call Law. The lawsuit alleges the Defendants violated Missouri law by making automated telephone calls, or
“robocalls,” offering health insurance to Missouri residents who were on the Missouri No-Call list.

According to the suit, the Defendants called Missouri residents registered on the state’s No-Call list with a recorded message claiming they had pre-approved health insurance plans for low cost in the area. The calls encouraged the recipient to press a number for a “hassle free assessment”.

“These calls are not only annoying; they are in clear violation of the Missouri No-Call list,” Schmitt said. “That is breaking Missouri...


NEBRASKA

March 07, 2019

Nebraska Attorney General Supports Nationwide Takedown of Tech Support Scams

Lincoln – Attorney General Doug Peterson, in coordination with attorneys general from across the country through the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), has joined the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other regulators to announce a nationwide takedown of tech support scams.

According to General Peterson, “With today’s announcement, we hope to help consumers recognize the red flags of a tech support scam. I applaud the efforts of my colleagues in law enforcement to identify these scammers, hold them accountable, and educate consumers on how to avoid falling victim to these scams.”

These scam artists use phone calls and online ads resembling security alerts from major technology companies to trick consumers into contacting the operators of these schemes and providing access to the consumers’ computers. The scammers will claim consumers’ computers are infected with viruses or experiencing other problems. They then try to pressure consumers into buying...


March 21, 2019

Attorney General Ford and Secretary of State Cegavske Announce Multi-Year Sentence in Local Investment Scam

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford announced that Las Vegas resident Paulette Marie Goetz, 70, was sentenced in a criminal case involving an investment scam run through an entity doing business as Corporate Associates, Inc. Goetz, who operated and controlled the business, previously pleaded guilty in this case to one count of securities fraud and one count of multiple transactions involving fraud or deceit in the course of an enterprise
or occupation, both category “B” felonies. Through Corporate Associates, Inc., Goetz duped her victims into investing thousands of dollars by making a series of misrepresentations. She falsely promised, among other things, that there was no risk involved in their investments, and that her investors were guaranteed a profit of at least 10 percent of their investment per month. However, the money was never invested nor returned to the victims. In total, the victims named in the indictment lost...

➢ **Original Press Release:**
http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2019/Attorney_General_Ford_and_Secretary_of_State_Cegavske_Anounce_Multi-Year_Sentence_in_Local_Investment_Scam/

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NEW JERSEY

March 26, 2019

**Father and Son Plead Guilty to Defrauding Investors of Millions of Dollars**

TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal announced that a father and son have pleaded guilty to defrauding investors of millions of dollars through two successive scams involving sales of bogus investments. After defrauding 26 investors in the first scam, the father and son agreed to pay $5.5 million, including $4 million in investor restitution, to settle a suit filed by the New Jersey Bureau of Securities, but they then proceeded to defraud 15 of the same investors of $3 million in a second scam.

The following defendants pleaded guilty yesterday before Superior Court Judge Margaret M. Foti in Bergen County:

George Bussanich Sr., 60, of Park Ridge, N.J., pleaded guilty to first-degree conspiracy to commit securities fraud and money laundering. Under the plea agreement, the state will recommend that he be sentenced to 10 years in state prison.

George Bussanich Jr., 39, of Saddle River, N.J. – who solicited investor funds...

➢ **Original Press Release:** [https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases19/pr20190326a.html](https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases19/pr20190326a.html)

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March 22, 2019

**AG Grewal Files First State Lawsuit Against “Ghost Gun” Company for Offering Untraceable Guns in NJ**

TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal today filed suit against a “ghost gun” company that allegedly sold an assault firearms kit online to an undercover state investigator. This marks the first such lawsuit against a ghost gun distributor.

“Ghost guns” are partially-assembled firearms sold with the parts needed to create a fully-operational gun – and often even with the instructions on how to do so. Because “ghost guns” are incomplete at the moment of sale, the companies do not require their buyers to go through background checks. That allows prohibited persons – including terrorists, fugitives and felons – to get firearms that they otherwise could not obtain. And completed “ghost guns” lack serial
numbers, which makes it harder for law enforcement to trace the weapons to their owners and solve gun-related crimes.
The defendant is James Tromblee, Jr., founder and owner of the California-based ghost gun company U.S. Patriot Armory. The...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases19/pr20190322a.html

March 12, 2019
New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Conducts Unannounced Inspections of Home Heating Oil Delivery Trucks
NEWARK– As the March chill keeps home heating oil companies busy with deliveries, the Division of Consumer Affairs’ Office of Weights and Measures (“OWM”) is making sure winter-weary consumers are getting every gallon of fuel oil they pay for in the final weeks of the fuel season.
In early morning surprise inspections near a Newark fueling depot two weeks ago, OWM’s Fuel Meter Task Force checked trucks for signs of meter tampering or compromised equipment that could result in consumers being charged for more oil than they actually receive.
“New Jersey residents who rely on oil to heat their homes may purchase hundreds of gallons at a time and they deserve to get every drop they pay for,” said Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal. “The majority of the oil companies and individuals who operate these trucks are honest. Surprise inspections like this help protect the integrity of the home fuel industry by...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases19/pr20190312c.html

March 07, 2019
Division of Consumer Affairs Files Lawsuit Against Two South Jersey ‘Buy Here-Pay Here’ Auto Dealerships Alleging Fraud and Deception in Sales and In-House Financing Targeting Consumers with Poor Credit
NEWARK – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that the state has filed a lawsuit against two South Jersey “Buy Here-Pay Here” auto dealerships and their owner for alleging targeting financially vulnerable consumers in predatory sales and loan tactics.
Defendants Nu 2 U Auto World (“Nu 2 U”) in Clementon; Pine Valley Motors Incorporated of New Jersey (“Pine Valley”) in Berlin, and Kenneth R. Cohen of Magnolia, allegedly preyed on consumers unable to acquire credit at more traditional car dealerships by selling them high-mileage, used autos at grossly inflated prices; financing the sales through in-house loans with high interest rates and draconian terms that created a high risk of default; and then reclaiming and reselling the vehicles over and over again to different consumers in a practice known as “churning.”
The suit, filed in Superior Court in Camden County, reflects the Division’s ongoing efforts to...

Original Press Release: https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases19/pr20190307b.html

NEW YORK

March 28, 2019

Attorney General James Files Nation’s Most Comprehensive Suit Against Opioid Distributors And Manufacturers

NEW YORK - Today, Attorney General Letitia James filed the nation’s most extensive lawsuit against the manufacturers, Sackler Family, and distributors of opioids for their role in the opioid epidemic that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives and devastated families and communities. The lawsuit alleges that through years of false and deceptive marketing, and by ignoring their duties to prevent the unlawful diversion of controlled substances, these six national prescription opioid manufacturers, the Sackler Family, and four national prescription drug distributors are largely responsible for creating the opioid epidemic that has ravaged New York, causing widespread addiction, overdose deaths, and suffering. This lawsuit breaks new ground by setting forth an extensive set of facts alleging that prescription drug distributors failed to exercise their duties to detect and report diversion of opioids through poorly designed, poorly resourced, and poorly executed suspicious order monitoring programs.

The amended complaint expands an earlier...


March 21, 2019

Attorney General James And Acting Financial Services Superintendent Lacewell Crack Down On Brooklyn Insurance Fraud Scheme

KINGS COUNTY – Attorney General Letitia James and Department of Financial Services Acting Superintendent Linda A. Lacewell announced the arrest and arraignment of Barrington Mayne (34, of Bronx County, NY) on a felony complaint for an alleged insurance fraud scheme. Mayne, who is not an insurance broker, allegedly used his position and contacts at various car dealerships throughout Brooklyn to dupe unsuspecting car buyers into believing that he was an insurance broker capable of obtaining car insurance. Mayne allegedly stole thousands of dollars from victims who were tricked into paying him insurance premiums for purported insurance policies. Mayne is charged with one count of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree and two counts of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree.

"All New Yorkers pay a price for insurance fraud, which drives up premiums across the board,” said Attorney General Letitia James. "This alleged scheme led unsuspecting customers to
believe...


March 19, 2019
Attorney General James Announces $62.5 Million In Settlement Credits For Spectrum Customers
NEW YORK – Attorney General Letitia James today announced that Spectrum (formerly Time Warner Cable) has started to issue credits to New York consumers as required by Charter Communications, Inc.’s December 17, 2018 settlement agreement. The settlement agreement resulted from an action brought by the Office of the Attorney General alleging that the company failed to deliver customers the reliable and fast internet service it had promised. Under the terms of the settlement, Charter is required to issue monetary relief to qualified subscribers and offer video streaming services, described below, at no charge. In all, qualified subscribers will receive $62.5 million in bill credits. Subscribers do not have to fill out any paperwork to obtain the credit, but must contact Spectrum to receive the streaming services. “Today, New Yorkers will start to receive the tens of millions of dollars and additional services owed to them due to the company’s failure...


March 14, 2019
Attorney General James Announces Indictment Of Two Long Island Men For Deed Theft Of Two Residential Properties
BROOKLYN – Attorney General Letitia James today announced the indictment of Andy Francis, 62, of Elmont, Long Island, and Frank Torres, 60, of Dix Hills, Long Island, for filing two fraudulent deeds and supporting documents with the New York City Register’s Office in order to fraudulently acquire ownership of two separate residential homes, one in Brooklyn and one in Queens. Francis and Torres are each charged with two counts of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony. Additionally, Francis is charged with twelve counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Torres is charged with ten counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the first Degree, a class E felony. Francis is yet to be arraigned. Torres was arraigned today before Justice Barry Kron in Queens County Supreme Court. “No homeowner should have to fear theft of their home from...

March 14, 2019

Attorney General James, HCR, And HPD Intervene In Federal Court To Stop Eviction Of NYC Rent-Stabilized Tenants

NEW YORK, NY – Today, Attorney General Letitia James, New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (NYSHCR) Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas, and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer announced that the City and State sought to join in an action in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York on behalf of tenants at 444 East 13th Street in Manhattan. Both the City and State are opposing the building owner’s application to reject tenants’ leases, an application that is a thinly-veiled attempt to flout rent regulation laws and displace tenants.

“Bankruptcy Court should not be used as a tool to unjustly oust rent-stabilized New Yorkers from their homes,” said Attorney General Letitia James. “In filing this motion, my office is working to ensure that the tenants are not displaced. Housing is a right, and we will continue to...


March 11, 2019

Attorney General James Obtains $105,000 For Homeowners Following Condo Developer's Failure To Disclose Deed Restrictions For City Island Properties

NEW YORK—Attorney General Letitia James today announced a settlement with City Island Reserve LLC and its principal Curtis A. Pollock based on their failure to disclose two consent orders, deed restrictions, and other regulations restricting the use of property at the On the Sound Condominium on City Island in the Bronx, New York. Under the terms of the settlement, the developer will pay $105,000 in restitution to the board of the On the Sound Condominium. “No developer should ever get away with deceiving homeowners,” said Attorney General Letitia James. “Failing to disclose the legal restrictions on someone’s home is not only unlawful, but can have long-term financial impacts on New Yorkers. My office will continue to take on developers or landlords who try to harm New York residents.”

The On the Sound Condominium is a forty-three unit residential condominium on Island Point Road on City Island in the Bronx, New...


March 01, 2019

Attorney General James And Governor Cuomo Announce Lawsuit Against Queens Landlord For Violating Rent Stabilization Laws And Tenant Harassment

NEW YORK – Attorney General Letitia James and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced
a lawsuit against Zara Realty Holding Corp., its principals, and affiliated entities for repeatedly violating rent stabilization laws and harassing tenants at their Queens apartment buildings. The defendants, who own and manage at least 2,500 rent-stabilized apartments in 38 buildings in and around Jamaica, Queens, have taken advantage of their tenants, who are largely immigrant middle- and low-income families, by charging them illegal fees and rents, and requiring that they sign illegal leases. The Tenant Protection Unit of New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) uncovered these practices over the course of a two-year investigation and partnered with the Attorney General to file the suit.

“For years, Zara Realty has engaged in an egregious pattern of tenant harassment and exploitation,” said Attorney General Letitia James. “Evading our rent regulation laws and forcing low-income tenants to...


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NORTH CAROLINA

March 07, 2019

Attorney General Josh Stein Launches Investigation into Tech Company and Warns Consumers About Tech Support Scams

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today warned consumers to watch out for tech support scams as part of a nationwide crackdown on scammers who try to deceive customers into buying costly tech support and repair services and giving scammers access to personal data. As part of today’s crackdown, Attorney General Stein also announced that he has launched an investigation into Krish Tech LLC of Union County related to the company’s tech support operation and potential mining of personal data.

“Scammers who run tech support scams try to convince people that there’s a problem with their computer or phone to access and steal their personal information or money,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “People need to watch for the warning signs of these scams and report them to our office. My office will do everything in our power to hold these scammers accountable.”

Tech support and repair scams work in similar...


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OHIO

March 27, 2019

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost Pledges to Protect Ohioans with Pre-existing Conditions

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost today announced his intent to file an
amicus brief in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals supporting the reversal of a district court decision striking down the entire Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“I do not like judicial activism in either its liberal or conservative flavors,” Yost said. “Chief Justice Marshall was right when he said it is the province of the courts to say what the law is — but it is also true that the writing of the law belongs to Congress.”

Ohio will file a separate amicus brief in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals arguing the unconstitutional “individual mandate” can be removed from the ACA without throwing out its protections for pre-existing conditions. Lawyers call this “severability.”

A group of states started this lawsuit, arguing that when Congress reduced the penalty to zero for violating the individual mandate, the mandate became unconstitutional...


March 11, 2019

Attorney General Yost Files Lawsuits Against Condominium Developer Accused of Failing to Return Deposits

(CINCINNATI, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost today filed a consumer protection lawsuit against The Legacy Lofts on Courtland LLC and its owner, Scott Call, accusing both of multiple violations of Ohio’s consumer protection laws.

“When people put a deposit down for a condo to be built, they rightfully expect for their condo to be built,” Yost said. “These are huge deposits. Consumers are out of pocket, and they’ve received nothing in return.”

According to the lawsuit filed in Hamilton County, Legacy Lofts and Call planned to develop a former school and former church building into condominiums in Norwood, Ohio. In 2017, Legacy Lofts began soliciting consumers to enter into agreements to purchase units in the condominium project. The consumers made a deposit, often of $5,000, and agreed to close on the unit when the project was completed. However, the condominiums, due to be completed in 2018, were never developed, and...


March 07, 2019

Attorney General Yost Files Suit in Conjunction with a Major Nationwide Takedown of Tech Support Scams

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) – Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced that he has sued the operators of a tech support scam as part of a nationwide crackdown on fraudsters who try to trick consumers into buying costly tech support and repair services.

“They might as well be selling a magic potion with eye of newt to fix your computer,” said Yost. “It’s a rip-off and I’m not going to stand for it.”
Ohio, in coordination with attorneys general from across the country through the National Association of Attorneys General, joined the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission, and other regulators in a nationwide sweep to combat tech support scammers. Tech support scams work in similar ways. Scammers use phone calls and online ads resembling security alerts from major technology companies to trick consumers into contacting the operators of these schemes and providing access to the consumers’ computers. The...


March 05, 2019
Attorney General Yost Files Lawsuits Against Home Repair Contractors Accused of Failing to Deliver Services to Consumers

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost has filed two consumer protection lawsuits against home improvement contractors accused of failing to deliver home improvement services to consumers in central and southwest Ohio.

“‘Take the money and run’ will get you in serious trouble in Ohio,” Yost said. “These two are going to have to face the judge.”

The first case is filed in Hamilton County. In that case Robert J. Collins, who owned United Home Solutions LLC, is accused of violating state consumer protection laws including the Consumer Sales Practices Act and the Home Solicitation Sales Act.

The lawsuit alleges a wide array of behavior by both Collins and his company in violation of Ohio’s consumer protection laws including taking consumers’ money and doing no work or performing work in a shoddy manner.

The company also allegedly failed to provide proper notice to consumers of their right to cancel their contracts within...


March 04, 2019
Attorney General Yost Seeks Reimbursement from Used Car Seller over Title Problems

(LIMA, Ohio) – Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a used car dealership and its owner accused of failing to deliver vehicle titles to consumers in northwest Ohio.

The lawsuit accuses Budget Motors & RV Sales LLC and Michael Stevens, its owner and operator, of violating Ohio consumer protection laws. According to the lawsuit, the dealership last operated at 115 West Kiracofe Ave. in Elida.

Two consumer complaints were filed against the dealership, with consumers alleging they never received the titles to vehicles they bought from Budget Motors & RV Sales. The Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section worked to resolve the complaints, in both
cases making payments from the Title Defect Resolution Fund - a program that helps used car buyers resolve certain title problems - to the consumers who could not obtain their titles.

“Thousands of Ohio consumers contact our office each...


OKLAHOMA

March 26, 2019

Attorney General Hunter Announces Historic $270 Million Settlement with Purdue Pharma, $200 Million to Establish Endowment for OSU Center for Wellness

TULSA, Okla. – Attorney General Mike Hunter and Oklahoma State University leaders today announced an historic settlement with Purdue Pharma that will establish a nearly $200 million endowment at the Oklahoma State University’s Center for Wellness and Recovery, which will go toward treating the ongoing addiction epidemic nationwide.

The trial against Johnson & Johnson, Teva and the other defendants named in the state’s lawsuit remains on track for May 28.

The endowment provides funding for an entity that will receive the initial $102.5 million that will go to the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences Center for Wellness and Recovery, Oklahoma’s most comprehensive treatment and research center for treating pain and addiction. Beginning Jan. 1, 2020, the entity will receive an annual $15 million payment over a five year period. During the same five year timeframe, it will receive ongoing contributions of addiction treatment medicine, valued at $20 million.

“The addiction crisis facing...


March 25, 2019

Oklahoma Supreme Court Denies Defendants Appeal of Lower Court Decision, Keeping State Trial against Opioid Manufacturers Set for May

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by opioid manufacturers that sought to delay the state’s upcoming trial against them.

The Supreme Court’s decision to not review the defendants’ appeal upholds Cleveland County District Judge Thad Balkman’s prior ruling to not delay the start of the trial by 100 days. The defendants asked for the delay, claiming attorneys working on the case couldn’t meet the deadlines set by judges.

Attorney General Mike Hunter said today’s ruling keeps the court date set for May 28 in
Cleveland County District Court.
“The Supreme Court made the right decision,” Attorney General Hunter said. “By refusing to review Judge Balkman’s prior decision, we are still on track for trial, where we seek justice for Oklahomans who have been affected by the ongoing opioid epidemic. Every day that goes by, we lose more of our loved ones to overdoses or down the tragic road...


March 13, 2019
Attorney General Hunter Comments on Supreme Court Ruling, Denying Opioid Manufacturers’ Requested Stay
OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Mike Hunter today released the following statement after Supreme Court Chief Justice Noma Gurich ruled against the defendants in the state’s trial against the nation’s leading opioid manufacturers, requiring the companies to meet all current deadlines.
Today’s ruling was given in response to Purdue Pharma’s appeal of District Judge Thad Balkman’s ruling on Friday to not delay the May 28 trial date for 100 days, as argued by defendants in the case.
The defendants claim they cannot meet the current deadlines set forth by the district judge. Attorney General Hunter said despite the continued attempts at delaying the trial, the state is ready for its day in court.
“By denying the defendant’s stay, Chief Justice Gurich has kept our case on track,” Attorney General Hunter said. “We look forward to making our oral arguments next week, where we will show that the state has continuously met deadlines, while the...


March 08, 2019
Attorney General Mike Hunter Lauds Judge Balkman’s Decision to not Delay State’s Opioid Trial
NORMAN – Attorney General Mike Hunter today commended Cleveland County District Judge Thad Balkman for ruling in the state’s favor, avoiding a delay in the state’s trial against the nation’s leading manufacturers of opioid pain medication.
Today’s ruling was in response to a motion by the defendants, asking the judge to delay the start of the trial for 100 days. With the judge’s ruling, the trial remains on schedule to begin May 28.
“I applaud the ruling by Judge Balkman to continue moving this case forward,” Attorney General Hunter said. “This ruling keeps our case on track for the May trial date where our attorneys will present the facts to Oklahomans. The team has worked tirelessly, taking
hundreds of depositions and reading through millions of pages of documents. In the months ahead, we are going to continue this thorough preparation in order to present our case. We remain steadfast in our mission...


OREGON

March 11, 2019

AG Rosenblum Announces Large Settlement with Pfizer for Misleading Drug Pricing Coupons

Attorney General Rosenblum today announced a $975,000 settlement with the pharmaceutical company, Pfizer, for distributing misleading marketing materials and coupons to Oregon consumers. The coupons distributed by Pfizer were designed to help consumers afford copays or deductibles associated with brand-name drugs.

A large portion of the settlement, $620,000, will go to support two local organizations, Project Access Now and Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, which both help uninsured and underinsured Oregonians afford health care. The remaining amount will help the Department of Justice fund future investigations and reimburse consumers who used the misleading coupons.

“When it comes to the price of medications, we will not tolerate pharmaceutical companies taking advantage of Oregonians. Pfizer enticed consumers with these coupons for one reason only—to sell its brand-name drugs instead of a cheaper generic. These coupons were simply not a good deal for consumers, who were misled by Pfizer into thinking they were,” said...  


PENNSYLVANIA

March 25, 2019

Attorney General Shapiro, US Attorney’s Office Announce Charges Against Eleven People, Nine Businesses in Connection with Treatment Center Insurance Fraud

PHILADELPHIA — Today at a press conference at the Office of Attorney General in Philadelphia, Attorney General Josh Shapiro and First Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania Jennifer Williams announced state and federal criminal charges against eleven people and nine businesses in connection with an elaborate insurance fraud scheme involving treatment centers. The state charges include corrupt organizations, dealing in proceeds of unlawful activities, criminal conspiracy, insurance fraud, and identity theft. The federal charges are conspiracy to commit health care fraud.

The charges are the result of an 18-month investigation by the 41st Statewide Investigating
Grand Jury into allegations that Liberation Way and its co-founders, Jason Gerner and the late Dallas Fetterman, were running an insurance fraud scheme out of the drug and alcohol treatment center. The Grand Jury investigation revealed a sophisticated, multi-layered scam that took advantage of vulnerable people suffering from substance use disorder to...


March 21, 2019

Attorney General Josh Shapiro Files Lawsuit Against Fayette County Furniture Retailer

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Shapiro today announced that his office filed a lawsuit against Uniontown furniture retailer B.J. Mundel Furniture Co. d/b/a Mundel's Furniture and d/b/a Mundels Furniture and Appliance Outlet; Mundels Mattress Center, Inc.; and Randolph S. Mundel, Individually.

The Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection received consumer complaints alleging the Defendants failed to make timely delivery of merchandise and then failed to make timely refunds to consumers for merchandise not delivered. One consumer has been waiting for over two years for a refund of the deposit he made for a mattress that was never delivered.

Since 2017, at least $11,695 worth of furniture was not delivered to 12 consumers on the prearranged date. These consumer filed complaints with the Bureau of Consumer Protection stating they either had not received their furniture or a refund. Each payment to the Defendants ranged from $100 to $3,389.

“Pennsylvania consumers trusted this furniture company to...


March 15, 2019

Statement by Attorney General Josh Shapiro on Commonwealth Court Win against Chesapeake and Anadarko Energy Companies

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro issued the following statement on today’s ruling by the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania:

“Today’s Commonwealth Court ruling is a victory that upholds our lawsuit against Chesapeake Energy Corporation and Anadarko Petroleum Corporation. The court’s decision allows our action to move forward and address the misconduct by these companies against landowners in oil and gas leases under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law. I’m fighting for landowners who we charge have been ripped off, and my Office will continue to pursue this case on behalf of Northeast Pennsylvanians.
AG Paxton Reaches Settlement with Unofficial Ticket-Seller for Deceptive Hidden Fees

Attorney General Ken Paxton today filed a final judgment and permanent injunction against Guided Tourist, LLC, an Austin-based third-party online booking company that advertises and sells tickets to tour national parks and monuments, including the Statue of Liberty and Alcatraz Island. The State’s lawsuit shows that Guided Tourist, LLC failed to disclose to consumers that it is not an official ticket vendor and inadequately discloses its booking fees, legal name, contact information, hours of operation, and refund policy.

The judgment orders Guided Tourist, LLC to provide notice to Texas customers that they may be eligible to receive a refund of any undisclosed fees imposed by the company. Additionally, Guided Tourist, LLC must respond to complaints filed by Texas consumers by refunding any undisclosed mandatory fees in full.

“All Texans deserve to know exactly what a company is charging them when they make a purchase. Hidden fees and unnecessary charges on ticket sales..."
UTAH
March 11, 2019

**UTAH AG PARTNERS WITH DOJ, SISTER-STATES IN NATIONAL TAKEDOWN ON TECH SUPPORT SCAMS**

SALT LAKE CITY – Today, Attorney General Sean D. Reyes announced the Utah Attorney General’s Office is partnering with sister-states and the DOJ as part of a nationwide crackdown on fraudsters who try to trick consumers into buying costly tech support and repair services. Utah, in coordination with attorneys general from across the country through the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), has joined the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other regulators to combat tech support scams. As part of this effort, NAAG and the Department of Justice announced a sweep of elder fraud cases and focused particular attention on tech support scams as a major threat to senior citizens. These scams work in similar ways. Scammers use phone calls and online ads resembling security alerts from major technology companies to trick consumers into contacting the operators of these schemes and providing access to...


VERMONT

March 26, 2019

**Attorney General Donovan Sues Opiate Distributors Cardinal and McKesson**

Attorney General T.J. Donovan today filed a lawsuit against two distributors of opiates, Cardinal Health Inc. and McKesson Corporation. The lawsuit, filed in Chittenden Superior Court, alleges that Defendants committed unfair and deceptive acts in violation of the Vermont Consumer Protection Act and alleges claims of negligence and public nuisance. The State also contends that these distributors fraudulently concealed their unlawful conduct.

“Cardinal and McKesson sold out their duty to the public in exchange their bottom line,” Attorney General Donovan said. “They ignored the fact that opioid sales in Vermont were far out-pacing legitimate need. These distributors were obligated to identify and report this problem. Instead, they just kept on selling.”

The State’s lawsuit alleges that Defendants’ systems were wholly inadequate to fulfill their legal duty to monitor and control the sale of opioids. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has referred to distributors as the “first major line of defense” against...

March 21, 2019

**Vermont Superior Court Rules in Favor of State in Opioids Case**

The Chittenden Superior Court has denied Purdue Pharma’s motion to dismiss the State’s case against it. The judge ruled that the State may bring all its claims against Purdue Pharma arising from allegations that it “aggressively and misleadingly marketed opioids such as Oxycontin in Vermont, leading to massive addiction and the resulting societal costs.” Attorney General T.J. Donovan said, “This decision is an important step toward holding Purdue responsible for its contribution to the creation of the opioid crisis.”

The Court’s decision can be found here.

The State’s lawsuit is based on Purdue Pharma’s behavior surrounding marketing of OxyContin and other long-acting opioid products for the treatment of chronic pain, including:

- Minimizing the serious risk of addiction;
- Denying or failing to disclose the dangers of opioids at higher doses, which increased the risk of addiction and overdose;
- Overstating the effectiveness of screening tools for preventing addiction, giving prescribers unwarranted confidence that they...


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**VIRGINIA**

March 08, 2019

**HERRING SECURES PERMANENT INJUNCTION AGAINST USBS FOR SCAMMING VIRGINIA BUSINESSES**

RICHMOND (March 8, 2019) – Attorney General Mark R. Herring has obtained a permanent injunction against US Business Services, LLC ("USBS"), a Florida business that has sent deceptive mailings to numerous Virginia businesses offering expensive but unnecessary corporate records and document preparation services. Additionally, during National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Herring is urging Virginians to protect themselves and their hard-earned money from deception, scams, and fraud, whether perpetrated in-person, online, through the mail, or on the phone.

"Scammers and con artists are always coming up with new and creative ways to take money from Virginians by using technology and mining social media to make themselves seem legitimate," said Attorney General Herring. “Companies like USBS take advantage of hardworking Virginians who are simply trying to follow the law. That's why you should always have your guard up, especially if a person or business is asking you to send money...

WEST VIRGINIA

March 21, 2019

West Virginia Finalizes $3.2M Prescription Drug Settlement

CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Attorney General’s Office has finalized a $3.2 million settlement with drug maker Bristol-Myers Squibb Company and marketer Sanofi-Aventis in relation to their marketing of the prescription blood thinner Plavix.

The settlement resolves allegations related to efforts by the companies to label, distribute, market, price, promote, advertise and sell Plavix. Specifically, the Attorney General’s Office alleged the defendants acted in an unfair and deceptive manner by marketing Plavix as a superior drug to aspirin with a much higher price, despite evidence showing Plavix had no better effect than aspirin for certain usages.

Settlement terms required Bristol-Myers Squibb and Sanofi-Aventis to individually pay $1.6 million.

The Attorney General’s Office also reached an agreement to cap attorney fees at 25 percent saving the state approximately $200,000 consistent with the Attorney General’s outside counsel policy, which has saved the state more than $4 million since implementation. The policy is...


Multistate Cases

COLORADO

March 14, 2019

Colorado Joins Multistate Lawsuit over Federal Rules Restricting Birth Control Coverage under the Affordable Care Act

Mar. 14, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) — Today, Attorney General Phil Weiser announced that the State of Colorado is joining a multistate lawsuit challenging two federal government rules that would significantly reduce women’s access to birth control coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Michigan and Nevada joined Colorado in moving to intervene in the case, which is pending in federal district court in California. Thirteen other plaintiff states and the District of Colombia have already joined California in this case.

Specifically, the lawsuit challenged U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) rules introduced in 2017 that expanded the exemption in the ACA as it pertains to contraceptive coverage beyond the scope of what was authorized by the Act.

Early this year, a federal court in California blocked the rule from taking effect in the states that sued. In January, a federal judge in Pennsylvania issued a nationwide injunction blocking the
CONNECTICUT

March 26, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL TONG JOINS COALITION OF 21 ATTORNEYS GENERAL IN BRIEF
DEFENDING ACA IN TEXAS V. US

Attorney General William Tong joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general, led by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, in filing an opening brief in Texas v. U.S., defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the healthcare of tens of millions of Americans. The brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, argues that every provision of the ACA remains valid. It also details the harm that declaring the ACA invalid would have on the tens of millions of people who rely on it for access to high-quality, affordable healthcare, as well as the broader damage that it would do to the nation’s healthcare system.

"This lawsuit was designed to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, decimate access to healthcare, and invalidate protections for millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions. Connecticut stands with 21 states across the nation in defending cancer patients, pregnant women, people with diabetes, young people...

ATTORNEY GENERAL TONG ANNOUNCES INVESTIGATION INTO HYUNDAI AND KIA FIRES

Attorney General William Tong today announced that Connecticut is one of the leaders of an ongoing multistate investigation into both Hyundai and Kia for potential Unfair and Deceptive Acts or Practices related to spontaneous vehicle fires.

"My office is one of the leaders of an ongoing multistate investigation into deeply troubling reports of spontaneous fires in Hyundai and Kia vehicles. We are aware of multiple fires involving Connecticut vehicles, including some allegedly already repaired through the recall process. This is a serious matter, and we are moving aggressively and responsibly to uncover the facts and to ensure accountability," said Attorney General Tong.

Media reports over the past several months describe accounts of Hyundai and Kia vehicles spontaneously bursting into flames. On some occasions, cars caught fire while traveling on streets or highways. In others, the cars caught fire while parked on the street or in consumers' home garages. Some consumers were unaware...

March 14, 2019

Attorney General Moody Secures Millions Against Two Major Automotive Industry Companies for Consumer Protection Violations

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today announced a global resolution involving Fiat and Bosch. Attorney General Moody working with leaders from 51 other jurisdictions along with federal agencies secured nearly $200 million following an investigation into Fiat automobiles. Fiat allegedly sold vehicles containing illegal defeat devices supplied and programmed by engineering and electronics company Bosch. Restitution will be made available through agreements secured with both companies as part of the global resolution. The agreements, subject to court approval, resolve allegations that Fiat cheated on federal emissions tests and made false claims about its allegedly environmentally-friendly vehicles, when the vehicles actually emitted higher than permitted levels of nitrogen oxides.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Purchasing a new vehicle is a major decision for any family, and consumers must be provided accurate information before making such an expensive purchase. Not only did the alleged deception mislead consumers, it may have also led to...

 Original Press Release:

March 07, 2019

Florida Joins Nationwide Sweep to Stop Tech Support Scams

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Office today joined the United States Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission and other state attorneys general in a nationwide sweep to stop tech support scams. As part of the sweep, Attorney General Moody’s Consumer Protection Division took action in three separate cases to shutdown tech support scams operating in Florida—with the latest court action filed today during National Consumer Protection Week.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Tech support scams prey on people’s fear and insecurity about technology to trick them into paying for repairs and services they do not need. These fraudsters often contact seniors hoping their inexperience with technology will make them easy targets. Our Consumer Protection Division is actively identifying, investigating and taking these unscrupulous fraudsters to court.”

The complaint filed today against American PC Corporation, based out of Sunrise, accuses the company of deceiving consumers into purchasing unnecessary computer services and products....
HAWAII
March 25, 2019
Hawaii Attorney General Joins Coalition of 21 Attorneys General in Filing Opening Brief in Texas v. US
Honolulu – Attorney General Clare E. Connors, joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general, led by California Attorney General Becerra, in filing an opening brief in Texas v. U.S., defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the healthcare needs of millions of Americans. Today’s brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, argues that every provision of the ACA remains valid. It also details the harm that declaring the ACA invalid would have on the tens of millions of people who rely on it for access to high-quality, affordable healthcare, as well as the broader damage that it would do to the nation’s healthcare system.
“The plaintiffs’ position with respect to the unconstitutionality of the minimum coverage provision is without merit,” said Attorney General Clare E. Connors. “Moreover, using this provision to bring down the entire Affordable Care Act will have adverse consequences for the health...

ILLINOIS
March 26, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUl FILES BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT
Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with a coalition of 20 attorneys general, filed an opening brief in Texas v. U.S. defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the health care of tens of millions of Americans.
Raoul’s brief, filed Monday in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, argues that every provision of the ACA remains valid. It also details the harm that declaring the ACA invalid would have on the tens of millions of people who rely on it for access to high-quality, affordable health care, as well as the broader damage that it would do to the nation’s health care system.
“Invalidating any part of the Affordable Care Act would have devastating consequences on some of our most vulnerable populations, particularly children with preexisting conditions, seniors and people who rely on Medicaid for coverage,” Raoul said. “I will continue to fight attempts to repeal the Affordable...
KANSAS

March 06, 2019

**AG Derek Schmidt: Kansans eligible to receive $2.3 million from Fiat Chrysler settlement for consumer protection violations**

TOPEKA – (March 6, 2019) – More than 1,000 Kansas consumers who purchased or leased Jeep or Dodge model vehicles with 3.0-liter V6 diesel engines are eligible to receive an estimated $2.3 million from Fiat Chrysler as a part of a legal settlement with the State of Kansas, Attorney General Derek Schmidt announced today.

The settlement with Kansas, together with related settlements with the federal government and other states, resolves consumer protection claims brought against the car manufacturer by Schmidt, the attorneys general of 51 other states and territories and several other state environmental enforcement agencies. The company was accused of violating state laws prohibiting deceptive or unconscionable acts and practices by marketing, selling and leasing diesel vehicles equipped with illegal and undisclosed emissions defeat-device software.

“When purchasing a new car, Kansans deserve to have honest information,” Schmidt said. “This settlement will enable Kansans who were deceived to have their vehicles modified...


KENTUCKY

March 25, 2019

**Beshear Moving Forward in Fight for Affordable, Accessible Health Care**


Beshear said he is proud to be leading Kentucky’s efforts to preserve access to affordable health care for more than 1.3 million Kentuckians and tens of millions of Americans.

“This case is about making sure our families have the ability to see a good doctor and afford treatment,” said Beshear. “If this case is not overturned, our health care systems could crumble and the effects would be devastating for those with pre-existing conditions who would be denied coverage and for women and seniors who would be forced to pay more.”

Beshear said there are at least 10 key ways Kentuckians would be harmed if the...
MASSACHUSETTS

March 26, 2019

AG Healey Defends Health Care for Millions of Massachusetts Residents in Court Filing

Boston — As the Trump Administration expands its attack on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), arguing that a federal court should strike down the entire law, Attorney General Maura Healey joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general in filing a brief defending the ACA and the healthcare of millions of Americans in the appeal of a December 2018 ruling in Texas v. U.S.

The brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, challenges the lower court’s ruling that the entire ACA has been rendered unconstitutional due to changes to the minimum coverage requirement adopted by Congress last year. The brief also details the harmful effects of dismantling the ACA for tens of millions of people who rely on it for access to high-quality, affordable healthcare.

“The Trump Administration’s goal is to strip away health care from millions of Americans who depend on the Affordable Care Act,” said...
March 12, 2019

**Attorney General Ellison announces settlements with Fiat Chrysler and Bosch for unlawful emissions-cheating scheme**

March 12, 2019 (SAINT PAUL) — Attorney General Keith Ellison announced today that Minnesota has obtained settlements from automaker Fiat Chrysler and auto supplier Bosch for engaging in an emissions-cheating scheme. In that scheme, unlawful “defeat device” software was installed in some of Fiat’s diesel vehicles so that they could be marketed and sold in Minnesota as “environmentally friendly” when in reality, they spewed harmful pollutants at levels 35 times higher than allowed by law. Fiat is required to pay Minnesota more than $1 million and Bosch is required to pay Minnesota more than $2.4 million as part of their settlements with 52 jurisdictions nationwide that require those companies to pay a total of over $170 million.

“One way to help Minnesotans afford their lives is to make sure they get the benefit of the bargain that they paid for,” said Attorney General Ellison. “Fiat Chrysler and Bosch falsely promised Minnesota...

➢ [Original Press Release](https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Communications/20190312_EmissionsCheatingSettlement.asp)

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March 01, 2019

**Attorney General Ellison Announces Launch of Wells Fargo Consumer Redress Review Program**

March 1, 2019 (SAINT PAUL) — Attorney General Keith Ellison today announced that Wells Fargo — as required by its December 2018 settlement with the attorneys general of all 50 states and the District of Columbia for violating consumer-protection laws — has launched a special redress-review program to refund and make whole any victims of Wells Fargo’s unlawful practices who have not already received relief. The program is intended to give consumers who believe they were harmed by the bank’s conduct but who were not covered by prior restitution programs the ability to be reviewed for potential redress.

As part of the settlement, Wells Fargo was required to pay $9.3 million to Minnesota, in addition to fines and penalties paid to federal regulators, to account for its deceptive and illegal practices. In addition, Wells Fargo was required to implement a redress-review program, which was a key component of the $575 million...

➢ [Original Press Release](https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Communications/20190301_WellsFargoConsumerRedress.asp)
MISSOURI
March 06, 2019
AG Schmitt Announces Start of Wells Fargo Consumer Redress Review Program
Jefferson City, Mo. – Wells Fargo has launched a consumer review program for Missourians who believe they were harmed by the actions of the company, but have yet to receive compensation, according to Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt.
Wells Fargo’s consumer review program was a key component of the December 2018 settlement with the attorneys general of all 50 states and the District of Columbia to resolve claims that the bank violated state consumer protection laws by (1) opening millions of unauthorized accounts and enrolling customers into online banking services without their knowledge or consent, (2) improperly referring customers for enrollment in third-party renters and life insurance policies, (3) improperly charging auto loan customers for force-placed and unnecessary collateral protection insurance, (4) failing to ensure that customers received refunds of unearned premiums on certain optional auto finance guaranteed asset/auto protection ("GAP") products, and (5) incorrectly charging customers for mortgage rate lock...


NEVADA
March 26, 2019
Attorney General Aaron Ford, 20 States File Opening Brief in Federal Affordable Care Act Case
Carson City, NV – Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general in filing an opening brief in Texas v. U.S., defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the healthcare of tens of millions of Americans. The brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, argues that every provision of the ACA remains valid. It also details the harm that declaring the ACA invalid would have on the tens of millions of people who rely on this program for access to high-quality, affordable healthcare, as well as the broader effect it would have on the nation’s healthcare system.
“Defending the Affordable Care Act means defending 133 million Americans, including 17 million kids with preexisting health conditions,” said AG Ford. “My office joins 20 other states taking a legal stand to ensure our residents, including hundreds of thousands of Nevadans, have accessible and affordable...

Original Press Release: http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2019/Attorney_General_Aaron_Ford,_20_States_File_Opening_Brief_in_Federal_Affordable_Care_Act_Case/
NEW YORK
March 28, 2019
Attorney General James Announces Major Win Over Trump Administration’s Attempt To Dismantle Affordable Care Act
NEW YORK— New York Attorney General Letitia James today announced a historic win in a comprehensive lawsuit led by New York and joined by a coalition of 10 states and the District of Columbia challenging the Department of Labor’s Association Health Plan (AHP) Rule, which expands the criteria for forming AHPs in order to evade consumer protections and sabotage the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The decision from the United States District Court for the District of Columbia states that the rule is “clearly an end-run around the ACA” and “creates absurd results.” Attorney General Letitia James released the following statement:
“Today’s ruling is a win for the New Yorkers and Americans who seek access to quality, affordable healthcare in this country. We are pleased that the District Court saw past the Trump Administration’s transparent effort to sabotage our healthcare system, and gut these critical consumer protections in the service of...”


PENNSYLVANIA
March 28, 2019
Statement by Attorney General Josh Shapiro on Court’s Rejection of Trump Administration’s Attempt to Undermine Affordable Care Act
HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro tonight issued the following statement on a federal judge’s rejection of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Association Health Plan Rule that sought to expand the criteria for forming health plans for the purpose of evading consumer protections and undermining the Affordable Care Act:
“The Affordable Care Act is the law, and we took action against association health plans to enforce that law and protect Pennsylvanians’ care,” said Attorney General Josh Shapiro. “Association health plans often lead to fraud, mismanagement, and abuse—they are not safe and affordable healthcare that Pennsylvania families can rely on. This court victory proves again that just because President Trump doesn’t like the Affordable Care Act, his Administration cannot get away with illegal maneuvers to ignore the law.”
“The Final Rule is clearly an end-run around the ACA,” wrote U.S. District Court Judge John D. Bates in his opinion. The ruling is the...”

TENNESSEE

March 15, 2019

AG Slatery Announces Settlement with Auto Parts Maker

Nashville-Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III announced that Bosch will pay the State of Tennessee $2,291,760 in consumer and environmental civil penalties. The agreement also includes precedent-setting injunctive terms and requires Bosch to maintain robust processes to monitor compliance and to refuse to accommodate requests for software development and programming that could result in the installation of defeat device software.

“This settlement with Bosch recognizes the important role that suppliers play in ensuring regulatory and legal compliance in the automotive industry and establishes the important precedent that those who knowingly go along with their clients’ wrongful conduct will be held accountable,” said Tennessee Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III.

When Volkswagen, a Bosch customer, was revealed to have systematically utilized defeat device software in its diesel vehicles, several states Attorneys General, including the Attorney General of Tennessee, commenced a separate investigation into the role played by Bosch. As a result of this investigation,...


VIRGINIA

March 25, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING CONTINUES TO DEFEND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IN COURT

RICHMOND (March 25, 2019) – Attorney General Mark R. Herring today joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general in filing an opening brief in Texas v. U.S., defending the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the healthcare of tens of millions of Americans. Today’s brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, argues that every provision of the ACA remains valid. It also details the harm that declaring the ACA invalid would have on the tens of millions of people who rely on it for access to high-quality, affordable healthcare, as well as the broader damage that it would do to the nation’s healthcare system. In June, Attorney General Herring intervened to defend against the suit, leaving him and his colleagues to defend Americans’ healthcare after President Trump switched sides and joined with Republican state attorneys general in trying to strike down the law.

“This...  


March 05, 2019
SETTLEMENTS WITH FIAT CHRYSLER AND AUTO SUPPLIER ROBERT BOSCH ADDRESS USE OF EMISSIONS DEFEAT DEVICES

RICHMOND (March 5, 2019) - As part of settlements stemming from the use of "emissions defeat devices," Fiat Chrysler and the auto parts supplier Robert Bosch will be required to fix vehicles, provide restitution, address environmental harms, and pay a total of $171 million to the states, including $5.3 million to Virginia. Bosch allegedly supplied and helped program the illegal emissions "defeat device" software used by both Fiat Chrysler and Volkswagen in their diesel vehicles.

Attorney General Herring previously reached a settlement with Volkswagen to address the company's illegal modification of the emissions systems of certain cars and violations of state laws. That settlement and related settlements required Volkswagen to fix affected vehicles, provide millions in compensation directly to the owners of the more than 20,000 affected VW and Audi vehicles bought or leased in Virginia, compensate the state for violations of consumer protection laws, and establish a trust fund...


WISCONSIN

March 25, 2019
AG Kaul Expands Efforts to Fight Opioid Epidemic; Joins Multistate Investigations of Opioid Distributors

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today announced Wisconsin has joined multistate investigations of opioid distributors and is seeking support for the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) budget request.

“The opioid epidemic is the most significant public-safety challenge we face,” said Attorney General Kaul. “Part of our response must include looking into whether conduct that may have contributed to that epidemic was unlawful and, if so, holding accountable those who broke the law.”

In September 2017, a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general publicly disclosed their joint investigations into the opioid manufacturers and distributors and disclosed that they were seeking documents and information about distribution practices of the following opioid distributors: AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson. These distributors manage approximately 90 percent of the nation’s opioid distribution. Under Attorney General Kaul, Wisconsin Department of Justice joined the distributor investigations.

These investigations are in addition to the multistate investigations of...

Medicaid Fraud

ARKANSAS

March 27, 2019

Rutledge Releases Statement Following Court’s Decision Vacating Medicaid’s Work Requirement

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today issued the following statement after the district court’s decision vacating the Arkansas Works Medicaid Demonstration Project. “I am disappointed in today’s decision and am reviewing the decision and coordinating with state and federal officials to determine the appropriate course of action. “The effect of Judge Boasberg’s order is that the work and community engagement requirements cannot be enforced, and Arkansas must provide three months of retroactive coverage instead of the one month allowed under the Arkansas Works approval. Beneficiaries who did not comply with the work and community engagement requirements for three consecutive months in 2018 and were removed from the program have always been eligible to reapply for coverage through the Medicaid expansion program. “Judge Boasberg’s decision does not change that, and it does not require that the Arkansas Department of Human Services automatically re-enroll any of those individuals in the program. Arkansans...


March 12, 2019

Rutledge Announces Helena-West Helena Business Owner Guilty of Medicaid Fraud and Failure to Pay Taxes

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced that the owner of Bridge of Faith Hospice & Palliative Care in Helena-West Helena has pleaded guilty two counts of Medicaid fraud and one count of willful failure to pay or file taxes. “Charline Brandon has swindled money from Arkansas for long enough and she is finally being held accountable,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Her actions hurt law-abiding Arkansans who work hard and follow our laws.” Brandon, 63, of Cleveland, Mississippi, pleaded guilty to two counts of Medicaid fraud and one count of willful failure to pay or file taxes. The Medicaid fraud investigation revealed that from September 2013 through December 2016, Bridge of Faith Hospice & Palliative Care was paid gross income of $1,567,432.82 by Medicaid and Medicare and never filed an income tax return in Arkansas. The Medicaid fraud charges resulted from Brandon billing the Arkansas Medicaid Program $289,986.46 for...
March 28, 2019

Carr Announces Indictments and Guilty Plea in Medicaid Fraud Cases

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced actions in two cases involving the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program” (“COMP”), the COMP is a Medicaid waiver program that provides services and support for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. In both cases, it is alleged that providers working under the COMP program improperly reported work on timesheets in order to gain financial benefit.

“Our Medicaid Fraud Control Division should be proud of the work they are doing to protect the integrity of the programs we have in place to support Georgians with intellectual or developmental disabilities. When funds dedicated to those programs are fraudulently diverted, not only do our vulnerable populations suffer, but the taxpayers of Georgia are harmed as well,” said Carr.

Case # 1 – Conviction: March 13, 2019

On March 13, 2019, Georgia resident Paula Houston pled guilty to one count of Medicaid Fraud in Cobb Superior Court.

March 14, 2019

Carr Announces Indictments of Four Suspects in Scheme to Exploit Disabled Adults and Medicaid

ATLANTA, GA - Owner and operator of Wishes 4 Me Foundation, Inc., Jennifer Lynn Robinette and associates Tonya Joy Ward, Bethany Braga, and Ronnika Barton have been indicted in connection with a scheme to allegedly obtain money to which they were not entitled from both the Georgia Medicaid program and disabled adults. On February 27, 2019, Robinette, Ward, Braga, and Barton were indicted on the following charges:

Two counts of Violation of the Georgia Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (Robinette, Ward, Braga, and Barton)
Four counts of Medicaid Fraud (Robinette, Ward, Braga, and Barton)
One count of Conspiracy to Defraud the State (Robinette, Ward, and Braga)
Nineteen counts of False Writings (Robinette)
Four counts of Forgery in the First Degree (Robinette, Ward, and Braga)
Eight counts of Exploitation of a Disabled Adult (Robinette, Ward, Braga, and Barton)
One count of Identity Fraud (Robinette)
Ward, Braga, and Barton turned themselves in...


IDAHO

March 14, 2019
St. Anthony Man Sentenced for Medicaid Provider Fraud
(Boise) – Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has announced a Fremont County man was sentenced Monday, March 11, for provider fraud. 46-year-old Elwood Conica, of St. Anthony, pleaded guilty in January. Seventh District Court Judge Stevan Thompson sentenced Conica to five years in prison. The judge ordered the defendant to pay $33,613 in restitution to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, a $500 fine, and $500 toward the cost of a public defender. Conica was also ordered to pay court costs. An investigation revealed Conica had billed Medicaid and then misappropriated Medicaid funds that should have been used on clients’ behalf. This resulted in clients not receiving all of the required healthcare products Medicaid funding should have provided them. In some cases, patients were forced to use their own money to purchase products as a result of the gap created by Conica’s fraudulent behavior. The investigation also revealed Conica billed Medicaid for certain,...


March 05, 2019
Boise Woman Sentenced for Medicaid Provider Fraud
(Boise) – Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has announced an Ada County woman was sentenced Friday, March 1, for provider fraud. 51-year-old Kimberley A. Reed, of Boise, pleaded guilty in January. Fourth District Court Judge Jason Scott sentenced Reed to a unified sentence of two years. The judge then suspended the sentence and ordered the defendant to complete two years of probation. Reed was also ordered to serve 75 days in jail as well as 30 days of discretionary jail. The court also ordered her to serve 150 hours of community service and pay $1,905 in restitution to Living Independence Network Corporation, as well as court costs. In June 2015, Reed, a care provider, submitted progress reports detailing personal care services provided to a client. Investigators later determined the client in question was incarcerated in the Ada County Jail when Reed claimed to have administered care. The false reports were later used as the...
**KENTUCKY**

March 15, 2019

**Beshear: Madisonville Nurse Indicted on Abuse, Neglect Charges**

MADISONVILLE, KY. (March 15, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear and his Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse today announced the indictment of a Madisonville woman on one count of abusing or neglecting an adult.

Ashley Maypray, 34, of Madisonville, was formally arraigned in Hopkins Circuit Court Thursday, March 14 on one count of knowingly abusing or neglecting an adult, a Class C felony.

It is alleged that on or about March 7, 2018, Maypray, who worked as a licensed practical nurse at a nursing home, was performing medical services on the victim when she slapped the victim across the mouth and pinched then twisted the skin on the victim’s arm.

If convicted, Maypray faces a potential sentence of up to ten years in prison and could also face profession sanctions.

A Hopkins County grand jury indicted Maypray on Thursday, February 21 and a pretrial conference has been scheduled for May 13.

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March 05, 2019

**Beshear: Former Prestonsburg Eye Center Employee Ordered to Repay State Medicaid Program over $12,000**

FRANKFORT, KY. (March 5, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today announced a Prestonsburg woman was sentenced and ordered to repay the state Medicaid program more than $12,000 after pleading guilty to theft charges and engaging in a scheme to defraud the program.

Amy Slone, 34, of Prestonsburg, a former employee at Minix Eye Care, PSC, entered a guilty plea on December 7, 2018, to one count of theft by unlawful taking over $10,000, a class C felony, and one count of devising or engaging in a scheme to defraud the Kentucky Medical Assistance Program of $300 or more.

“Ensuring our state programs are not abused and are there to serve those in need are at the core of our mission in the Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse,” said Beshear. “The successful investigation and prosecution of this case resulted in the state Medicaid program recouping the thousands of dollars that...
March 01, 2019

**Beshear: Former Hazard Caregiver Sentenced for Abusing, Neglecting Adult**

HAZARD, Ky. (March 1, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear and his Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse today announced the sentencing of a former caregiver on abuse charges of a vulnerable Kentuckian at a Hazard mental and physical disability facility in 2016.

Penny Caudill, 43, of Hazard, was sentenced Thursday, Feb. 28, in Perry Circuit Court after pleading guilty to one count of wanton abuse or neglect of an adult, a Class D felony, as a result of an incident that occurred on or about Sept. 29, 2016.

She received three years diverted for a period of three years and is listed on the Kentucky Caregiver Misconduct Registry.

Caudill, acting as a caregiver, observed the injury of an individual but she failed to arrange for professional medical treatment or prepare an incident report, according to court documents. According to court documents, John Hundley, 42, of Hazard, dragged a vulnerable Kentuckian who was participating...


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**LOUISIANA**

March 20, 2019

**Across Louisiana, Arrests Made for Medicaid Welfare Fraud**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Five Louisiana Medicaid recipients have been arrested on charges related to welfare fraud, announced Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry. The arrests come after investigations by the Louisiana Bureau of Investigation, the Louisiana Department of Health, and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s Office.

“It is troubling when people fraudulently receive benefits meant for those most in need,” said General Landry. “These arrests highlight the need to bolster our State’s vetting efforts on those applying for welfare benefits.”

Naji Khlaed Abdelsalam, 33 of Alexandria, was arrested on one count of theft over $25,000, one count of government benefits fraud, and one count of filing or maintaining false public records. He is alleged to have provided false information regarding his income and employment status in order to obtain welfare benefits for himself, his wife, and his five children. His family allegedly had over $40,000 worth of claims paid by the Medicaid program...

➤  **Original Press Release:** [https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/9647?catID=5](https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/9647?catID=5)

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**MASSACHUSETTS**

March 29, 2019
Carewell Urgent Care to Pay $2 Million to Resolve Allegations of False Claims for Medical Billing

Boston — CareWell Urgent Care Centers has agreed to pay a combined $2 million to the State of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, the Federal Government to resolve allegations that it routinely overbilled government insurance programs, including the state’s Medicaid Program (MassHealth) and insurance plans administered by the state’s Group Insurance Commission (GIC), Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

CareWell will pay nearly $858,000 to resolve claims relating to Massachusetts. Today’s settlement is a result of a joint investigation by the AG’s Office, the United States Attorney’s Office in Boston and the Rhode Island Attorney General’s Office.

“Urgent care centers provide necessary, time-sensitive care to families across Massachusetts,” said AG Healey. “CareWell took advantage of patients in Massachusetts by giving them exams they did not need, while at the same time overbilling the state and wasting critical health care resources.”

The AG’s Office alleges that beginning in March 2013, CareWell routinely overbilled MassHealth and GIC Plans for...


March 25, 2019

News Cambridge Genetic Testing Facility to Pay $500,000 for Overbilling MassHealth

Boston — The Center for Human Genetics, Inc. (CHG) in Cambridge will pay $500,000 to resolve allegations that it overbilled the state’s Medicaid system (MassHealth) for certain genetic tests, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

“Genetic testing facilities provide critical information to families and doctors throughout Massachusetts,” said AG Healey. “Complying with MassHealth billing regulations ensures that our health care resources are not wasted and supports needed services for our residents.”

Under the terms of the settlement, CHG will pay $500,000 to resolve allegations that between January 2007 and April 2012, CHG submitted multiple incorrect billing codes for genetic tests, allowing the company to improperly bill MassHealth for hundreds of thousands of dollars of reimbursement claims.

The AG’s Office further alleged that CHG — at the instruction of its co-directors, Drs. Aubrey and Jeffrey Milunsky — delayed the results of certain genetic tests to patients while CHG billed MassHealth for additional claims.

In addition...


March 18, 2019
News AG Healey’s Medicaid Fraud Division Recovers More than $45 Million for MassHealth in Fiscal Year 2018
Boston — Attorney General Maura Healey announced today that her Medicaid Fraud Division recovered more than $45 million for the state’s Medicaid program (MassHealth) in state fiscal year 2018.
The AG’s Medicaid Fraud Division investigates and prosecutes those who defraud the MassHealth program. The Division is also responsible for reviewing complaints of abuse, neglect, mistreatment and financial exploitation of patients in long-term care facilities. The Division recovered approximately $11 for every dollar appropriated in the 2018 fiscal year budget for its work.
“Our Medicaid Fraud Division works every day to protect the integrity of MassHealth and ensure that its funds are used appropriately to support our most vulnerable residents,” said AG Healey. “Each year, we recover millions of dollars for taxpayers and help ensure that residents are getting quality medical care.”
In fiscal year 2018, the AG’s Medicaid Fraud Division secured 18 civil settlements with various entities, include major pharmacy chains, home health...


March 13, 2019
AG Healey Announces Seven Settlements Following Major Investigation into Nursing Home Facilities
Boston — Attorney General Maura Healey announced today a series of settlements with seven different nursing homes to resolve allegations of systemic failures at their facilities that endangered nursing home residents.
The AG’s Office investigated reports of substandard care or regulatory violations at nursing homes based on complaints referred by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The AG’s Office found that these facilities had systemic issues that directly led to the death, injury or potential injury to nursing home residents.
“Every nursing home resident deserves to live in a safe environment, with dignity and access to high-quality care,” said AG Healey. “These settlements hold facilities accountable and will help restore the trust families need when making critical decisions about the care of their loved ones.”
“The Department of Public Health monitors the health and safety of residents in long-term care facilities throughout Massachusetts,” said Department of Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD,...

March 04, 2019

**News Brockton Adult Foster Care Provider Resolves Allegations of MassHealth Fraud**

Boston — Victory Human Services Inc. (Victory) will pay more than $548,000 to resolve allegations that it fraudulently charged the state’s Medicaid program (MassHealth) for Adult Foster Care (AFC) services, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

“It’s critically important that our MassHealth providers are honest about the services they provide,” said AG Healey. “This settlement with Victory will help ensure that our health care resources serve the people most in need.”

MassHealth pays for medically necessary AFC services when a qualified caregiver lives in a residence with the MassHealth member.

The AG’s Office alleged that, in 2013 and 2014, Victory knowingly and fraudulently billed MassHealth for AFC services even though some of its caregivers were not living with MassHealth members. Victory also failed to maintain documentation to support the level of AFC services for which it billed MassHealth.

Under the terms of the settlement, Victory will pay $548,410.16 to resolve these allegations, and...


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**MICHIGAN**

March 15, 2019

**Attorney General Nessel Charges Doctor in Vaccine Scheme**

LANSING – Attorney General Dana Nessel today charged Detroit physician Ashok Boinpally, M.D, with one count of Medicaid Fraud arising from his participation in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Health care providers who participate in the program receive Medicaid-funded vaccines, at no cost, to administer to eligible children.

Boinpally participated in the VFC program for more than 10 years. The Attorney General alleges that Boinpally was providing the Medicaid-funded vaccines he received through the VFC program to patients covered by private insurance – and then billed those private insurance companies. He was also providing vaccines he received through the VFC program to Medicaid beneficiaries and then billing Medicaid for those vaccines. Neither practice is allowed under the terms of the VFC program. The case filed by the Attorney General will seek $67,062.24 in restitution.

The matter was referred to the Attorney General’s Office by the Michigan Department of Health and Human...

* Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-492235--,00.html
MISSOURI

March 20, 2019

AG Schmitt Obtains Guilty Plea, $200,000 in Restitution in Medicaid Fraud Case

Jefferson City, Mo. - Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced that Dr. Thomas H. Alms of Mount Vernon, pled guilty to committing a class C felony of Medicaid fraud, following an investigation and prosecution by his office. Alms was ordered to repay $200,000.00 to the Medicaid program and surrender his license to practice dentistry and has been placed on probation for five years.

“The Medicaid program provides health benefits to low income families who don’t have access to health care,” Schmitt said. “Cheating the system is actually cheating all the Missourians who rely on Medicaid and the taxpayers of the state of Missouri. When we find cases of Medicaid fraud, we will take action.”

Dr. Alms operated a dental clinic in Mount Vernon Missouri where between August 21, 2014 and June 14, 2016 he submitted numerous false claims for bone grafts, fillings, pulp vitality tests, pre-orthodontic visits, and office visits. An investigation...


March 15, 2019

AG Schmitt Secures Guilty Plea, $6,000 in Restitution in Medicaid Fraud Case

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced today that Caruthersville native Felicia Ricks, 38, pled guilty to committing a class C felony of Medicaid fraud. Pursuant to a plea agreement, Ricks was sentenced to five years in the Missouri Department of Corrections and ordered to repay more than $6,000 to the Medicaid program.

“I’m dedicated to protecting Missouri’s most vulnerable. Those who rig the Medicaid system for unlawful personal gain will be punished, plain and simple,” said AG Schmitt. “The Medicaid Fraud Section works every day to ensure that those who seek to defraud or harm others through the Medicaid system are brought out of the shadows and to justice.”

Ricks purported to provide in-home personal care services to a Medicaid recipient. Between January 2015 and May 2015, Ricks completed timesheets detailing personal care services that she claimed to provide to a particular Medicaid recipient. However, Ricks did not...


NEVADA

March 18, 2019

Attorney General Ford Announces Sentencing of Medicaid Provider

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Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Aaron D. Ford announced that Felecia Bluntson, 34, of Las Vegas, was sentenced today in a Medicaid fraud case involving false billing for medical services to Medicaid recipients. The fraud occurred between May 2016 and September 2016. District Court Judge William Kephart sentenced Bluntson to 364 days incarceration, suspended, and placed her on probation for two years for a gross misdemeanor offense of failing to maintain adequate records. As part of the sentence, Bluntson was also ordered to pay $1,377.00 in restitution and perform 40 hours of community service. Individuals or businesses convicted of Medicaid fraud may also be administratively excluded from future Medicaid and Medicare participation.

“These convictions ensure that Medicaid providers are not cheating the system and are actually providing those much needed medical services to Nevadans,” said AG Ford. The investigation began after the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) received information that Bluntson...


NEW JERSEY

March 13, 2019
Pennsylvania Woman Sentenced to Prison for Stealing Nearly $78,000 from Elderly Relative with Dementia Living in Long-Term Care Facility
TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and the Office of Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (“OIFP”) announced that a Pennsylvania woman was sentenced to three years in state prison for stealing nearly $78,000 from an elderly relative who suffers from dementia and resides in a long-term care facility in Warren County, New Jersey. Deanna Attinello, 26, of Easton, Pennsylvania, also must pay $48,000 in restitution under the sentence handed down by Superior Court Judge H. Matthew Curry in Warren County on March 8. Attinello pleaded guilty last November to second-degree misapplication of entrusted property in connection with funds stolen from her 86-year-old great aunt, who was under Attinello’s legal guardianship.

“Financial abuse of the elderly is even more egregious when it deprives a victim of funds needed to provide for proper care in an institutional setting,” said Attorney General Grewal. “The prison sentence handed down to this defendant sends a clear message that those...

NEW YORK
March 15, 2019
Attorney General James Announces Sentencing Of Owner Of Three Manhattan Pharmacies For Defrauding Medicaid
NEW YORK – Attorney General Letitia James today announced the sentencing of licensed pharmacist Hin T. Wong (“Wong”), 50, of Manhattan, the owner of three Manhattan pharmacies in connection with a multi-million dollar Medicaid fraud scheme involving HIV drugs. Wong was sentenced today before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Mark Dwyer to a term of incarceration of two to six years in state prison. Wong additionally forfeited over $3,600,000 as restitution to the New York State Medicaid program.
“The defendant used vulnerable New Yorkers to steal millions of dollars earmarked for those who truly needed it,” said Attorney General Letitia James. “My office will continue to hold accountable health care professionals who choose to steal public funds rather than provide New Yorkers with essential health care.”
At the time of her guilty plea last month, Wong admitted to paying or directing her employees to pay kickbacks to several undercover agents from...


NORTH CAROLINA
March 29, 2019
Attorney General Josh Stein Announces Medicaid Fraudster Conviction
(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that Andrea Monique Purnell of Wade pleaded guilty to one count of Medicaid provider fraud in the Eastern District of North Carolina. “This individual defrauded the Medicaid program and wasted taxpayer money in the process,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue to hold people responsible for healthcare fraud and abuse.”
Purnell, formerly known as Andrea Boatman Hall, was the owner, operator, manager and/or CEO of Extended Reach Day Treatment for Children and Adolescents, a behavioral health services provider that offered “day treatment” services. From 2013 to 2016, Purnell engaged in a scheme to defraud Medicaid by submitting claims that included additional units of day treatment services that were higher than what was provided. Purnell also billed for day treatment services on dates when patients never received any services, and billed for psychotherapy services that were never provided.
In all, Purnell...

March 26, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Stein Announces $25,000 Settlement with Health Management Associates**

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that he has reached a $25,990.04 settlement with Health Management Associates LLC (HMA) to resolve allegations that the company submitted claims, or caused claims to be submitted, to government healthcare programs for inpatient services that were medically unnecessary and should have been billed as outpatient or observation services. Attorney General Stein is joined in the settlement by 16 other states and the federal government.

“This healthcare company manipulated patients to get more taxpayer money through Medicaid,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue to hold organizations and individuals accountable when they take part in wasteful and fraudulent practices.”

The settlement resolves allegations that from January 1, 2008, through December 31, 2012, HMA offered and provided remuneration to EmCare, a company that contracts to provide emergency department physicians, to increase emergency department admissions at HMA hospitals. These inpatient admissions for Medicaid and...


March 20, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Stein Reaches $209.2 Million Settlement with Walgreens Boots Alliance**

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that he has reached a $209.2 million settlement with Walgreens Boots Alliance (Walgreens) over allegations that the company knowingly engaged in fraudulent over-dispensing of insulin pens to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. Attorney General Stein is joined in this settlement by the federal government, all other 49 states, and the District of Columbia.

“Companies that misuse the Medicaid program are misusing taxpayer money,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue to hold organizations responsible when they engage in fraudulent and wasteful practices.”

The settlement resolves allegations that from January 1, 2006, through December 31, 2017, rather than dispensing the quantity of insulin called for by a patient’s prescription, Walgreens exceeded the prescription amount and falsified information on claims submitted for reimbursement to Medicare and Medicaid, including the quantity of insulin and/or days’ supply dispensed. This resulted in state Medicaid programs paying for...


March 19, 2019
Attorney General Stein Reaches $60 Million Settlement with Walgreens Co.

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced that he has reached a $60 million settlement with Walgreens Co. over allegations that the company violated the False Claims Act by billing Medicaid at rates higher than its usual and customary rates. Attorney General Stein is joined in this settlement by the federal government and 45 other states. As part of the settlement, North Carolina will receive $3,382,859.11 in restitution and other recoveries. “Today, we held Walgreens accountable for overbilling Medicaid. That’s illegal,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue our vigilance against fraud and waste because when companies cheat the Medicaid program, they cheat taxpayers.” The settlement resolves allegations related to the Prescription Savings Club (PSC), Walgreens’ discount drug program. An investigation revealed that Walgreens submitted claims to the states’ Medicaid programs that identified usual and customary prices for certain prescription drugs sold through PSC that were higher...


March 01, 2019

Attorney General Josh Stein Announces Medicaid Fraudster Sentenced in $4 Million Scheme

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein announced today that Catinia Denise Farrington of Cypress, Texas, was sentenced to 60 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release in the Middle District of North Carolina after pleading guilty in September to one count of healthcare fraud conspiracy and one count of tax evasion. Farrington was also ordered to make restitution payments of $3,950,656.01 to the Medicaid program and $391,747 to the Internal Revenue Service. “This defendant used illegally-obtained patient data to cheat the Medicaid program and steal taxpayer money,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will continue our work to hold people accountable for healthcare fraud and abuse.” Farrington owned Durham County Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services (DCMBHS) in Durham. From 2011 to 2015, DCMBHS submitted fraudulent claims to Medicaid that resulted in approximately $4 million being paid to DCMBHS for behavioral health services that were never provided....


OHIO

March 27, 2019

Owner of Addiction Treatment Centers Indicted on Medicaid Fraud, Drug Trafficking Charges

(IRONTON, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced today that an owner of three
addiction treatment centers in southern Ohio has been indicted on 34 felony charges, including Medicaid fraud, drug trafficking and engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity.

The indictment filed today in the Lawrence County Court of Common Pleas accuses Paul Vernier of overbilling for Medicaid services and illegally operating a dispensary for the addiction treatment drug Suboxone. Vernier ran two facilities in Portsmouth and another in Ironton, all under the name Community Counseling and Treatment Services. All three facilities have since closed.

“The evidence will show that this guy abused the trust of hurting people who were looking for help and that he played the rest of us – who pay the bills – for fools,” Yost said. “Time for some accountability.”

The indictment is the culmination of a multi-agency investigation by Yost’s Special Prosecutions...

March 15, 2019

**Cincinnati Woman Sentenced to Prison for Medicaid Fraud**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — A Cincinnati woman was sentenced to prison Thursday for fraudulently claiming Medicaid reimbursements of almost $215,000 for 6,832 hours she never worked, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced today.

Judge Richard Frye of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas sentenced Felicia Betts to 17 months in prison and ordered her to pay restitution of $214,957.84 to the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM). Betts pleaded guilty on Feb. 19 to Medicaid fraud, a fourth-degree felony.

“As Judge Frye said at sentencing, the amount of Medicaid dollars involved here is the equivalent of five bank robberies,” Attorney General Yost said. “A crime that severe warrants an equally severe punishment.”

Betts was an independent licensed practical nurse who provided overnight nursing services to a juvenile Medicaid recipient. An investigation by Yost’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit found she continued billing ODM for services after the recipient’s parents discontinued overnight care...


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**PENNSYLVANIA**

March 19, 2019

**Office of Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Nominated for Inspector General’s Award for Excellence in Fighting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced the Office of Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) was nominated for the Inspector General’s
Award for Excellence in Fighting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse for the 2019 Honor Awards Ceremony.
During the 2018 fiscal year, the Pennsylvania MFCU obtained significant case outcomes, including 164 arrests, 105 convictions, and total recoveries of over $22 million. Over the prior two fiscal years, the Unit obtained a total of 190 arrests, 171 convictions, and recoveries of nearly $56 million.
Accounting for the number of staff, the Pennsylvania Unit’s FY 2018 case outcomes ranked third out of all MFCUs. The Unit currently employs 68 attorneys, investigators, auditors, nurse analyst and other professionals, under the direction of Chief Deputy Attorney General Laurie Malone since 2017.
“Our robust Medicaid Fraud Control Unit works hard every day to root out fraud, neglect, and abuse in the Commonwealth. We are proud of...
One of the defendants, Dr. Liem Do, also agreed to no longer provide or be employed in any setting that involves state Medicaid and Medicare services. He also agreed that if Medicaid and Medicare initiate formal proceedings to bar him, he waives his right to contest them, a process known as “voluntary exclusion.”

In 2015, Ferguson filed a Medicaid fraud lawsuit in Clark County Superior Court against the Clark County company and its owners, Dr. Do and his wife Dr. Phuong-Oanh Tran. Ferguson alleged that CareOne Dental filed about $1 million in fraudulent claims to Medicaid between January 2011 and June 2015.

At one point,...

WEST VIRGINIA
March 26, 2019
Attorney General Morrisey Appreciates Gov. Justice’s Support of Medicaid Fraud Transfer
CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey praised Governor Jim Justice’s approval of Senate Bill 318, a bold step that will significantly strengthen the state’s fight against Medicaid fraud.

The Governor signed the legislation this week bringing West Virginia in line with 43 other states, all of which house Medicaid Fraud Control Units within the Attorney General’s Office. “I sincerely thank Governor Justice for signing this crucial piece of legislation,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Governor Justice’s signature will move West Virginia past the status quo and unleash the investigative power of our office to root out fraud in hopes of protecting those who legitimately rely upon Medicaid as a safety net.”

The state House of Delegates passed Senate Bill 318 earlier this month, after the legislation received bipartisan support in the state Senate and garnered editorial support from newspapers across West Virginia.

The legislation will move the state’s Medicaid Fraud Control...
Senate Bill 318 will bring West Virginia in line with aggressive Medicaid Fraud Control Units across the nation. It carries the favor of newspapers across West Virginia.

“I applaud the House and Senate for taking this historic step in rooting out fraud, waste and abuse,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “The unlawful taking of Medicaid benefits wastes tax dollars, deepens deficits and jeopardizes a program designed to help those most in need. Government cannot stand for such thievery, and with this bill West Virginia is in a much stronger position to hold bad actors accountable.”

Senate Bill 318 would move...


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**Consumer Advocacy**

**ALABAMA**

March 22, 2019

**Alabama Attorney General**

**Attorney General Steve Marshall, State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter Issue Consumer Alert About Fraudulent Checks That Appear to Be from State of Alabama**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall and State Comptroller Kathleen Baxter issued a consumer alert today warning that scammers are sending out fraudulent checks that purport to be from the State of Alabama Department of Finance. Even though no funds have been withdrawn from the State of Alabama accounts due to the fraudulent checks, it is important that the State of Alabama warn consumers of the scam that is taking place. The checks have been sent, usually by priority mail, throughout the United States. A letter instructs the recipient where to send a certain amount of the funds, and claims that the checks are sent for various fictitious reasons, including it is a sign-on bonus for a job that was applied for through the internet; that it is payment for agreeing to put advertising stickers, logos, or wraps on one’s vehicle, or that it is an inheritance from a recently-deceased family...


March 15, 2019

**Alabama Attorney General**

**Attorney General Steve Marshall, Lee County DA Brandon Hughes, Sheriff Jay Jones Join with Home Builders Licensure Board to Warn Against Home Repair Fraud Following Storm Damage**

(MONTGOMERY) – As Lee County and other parts of Alabama are struggling to recover from the devastating storms that struck on March 3, affected residents continue the hard work of clearing debris and repairing damage to homes and other structures. Attorney General Steve
Marshall, Lee County District Attorney Brandon Hughes, Sheriff Jay Jones and other local officials, today joined with the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board at a news conference to warn against fraudulent practices and advise how consumers may better protect themselves. The tornadoes and storms caused damage extensively throughout the southeast region of Alabama, including in Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Geneva, Henry, Lee, Macon and Washington counties.

“The good people of Alabama are strong and determined, and we come together in times of crisis such as this,” said Attorney General Steve Marshall. “In the devastation left by these storms, there is rebuilding to be done. As we move...

➢ Original Press Release:

March 06, 2019

Alabama Attorney General Attorney General Steve Marshall Encourages Generosity, Urges Vigilance When Donating to Groups to Aid Storm Victims AG with Gov. Ivey, Local Officials in Beauregard Today to Survey Storm Damage

(MONTGOMERY)—In the wake of horrific tornadoes that took nearly two dozen lives in eastern Alabama this week, many Alabamians are struggling to recover, while others are looking for ways to help those who lost everything. Attorney General Steve Marshall joined Governor Kay Ivey and local officials in Beauregard today to survey storm damage.

Attorney General Marshall urged the public to exercise caution before giving money to charities, to ensure that their money really goes to help tornado victims. He also reminded the public that Alabama’s price-gouging laws are in effect due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Kay Ivey.

“Alabamians are blessed with an indomitable spirit of compassion to help others,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Therefore, it’s not surprising that many want to contribute to their neighbors’ recovery from the recent devastating tornadoes. Sadly, criminals often seek to profit from others’ tragedies, therefore we must be vigilant in...

➢ Original Press Release:

March 01, 2019

Alabama Attorney General Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Top Consumer Complaints in Alabama During 2018

(MONTGOMERY) -- Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the top five categories of complaints from Alabama consumers received by his office’s Consumer Interest Division over the last year. They are complaints involving: 1. Automobiles, 2. Online Purchases, 3. Debt Collection, 4. Cable and Satellite Services, and 5. Landlord/Tenant Issues. The total number of consumer complaints in 2018 was 2,710.
“While National Consumer Protection Week is a time to remind everyone to be on guard against scams and fraud, my office is focused on consumer protection year-round,” said Attorney General Steve Marshall. “My Consumer Interest Division staff works hard to help consumers resolve disputes with businesses as well as investigate incidences of fraud. Not every case necessarily involves illegal activity, however, my office is always available to assist consumers with questions about potential scams and unscrupulous business practices.” Attorney General Marshall’s office maintains a consumer protection hotline, 1-800-392-5658, to take...
regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls and creates an interagency working group to take additional actions to reduce robocalls and hold telemarketers and robocallers accountable.

More than 48 billion robocalls were made...


March 05, 2019

Attorney General Brnovich Announces Arizona Consumer Protection Week

PHOENIX -- Arizona Consumer Protection Week is held annually in conjunction with National Consumer Protection Week, a nationwide campaign aimed at consumer protection and fighting fraud.

“Since the beginning of my administration, every week is consumer protection week at the Arizona Attorney General’s Office,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “From getting a refund for every Arizonan who qualified under the terms of the Theranos, Volkswagen and GM settlements, to obtaining judgments against businesses violating the Do Not Call list, our office is fighting for Arizona consumers.”

The Attorney General’s Office received more than 16,000 consumer complaints and inquiries in fiscal year 2018. The Attorney General’s Office was awarded more than $25 million in restitution for victims through consumer fraud lawsuits and legal settlements in 2018. In addition, the Office recovered more than $3 million for consumers by working together with consumers and businesses to settle consumer complaints without taking legal action.

In...


March 04, 2019

More than 13,000 Arizonans to Receive $5 Million in Total GM Restitution Checks

PHOENIX – As Arizona kicks off Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Mark Brnovich wants Arizona consumers to be on the lookout for settlement checks in the mail related to the Arizona Attorney General’s Office lawsuit against General Motors LLC (GM). More than 13,000 Arizonans will receive a payment of approximately $385, with the total amount of checks totaling over $5 million. These checks are being mailed to eligible Arizona consumers who previously received and returned a consumer release prior to the deadline of January 9, 2019.

Sample Check (pictured below)

If an eligible consumer receives a check, the consumer should deposit or cash the check with their financial institution within 90 days. No further action is required on the consumer’s part.
The Arizona Attorney General and General Motors reached the settlement in March 2018 regarding certain GM vehicles that were recalled for ignition switches, airbags, and power steering systems in 2014....


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ARKANSAS

March 28, 2019

Rutledge Praises Unopposed Approval of Robocall and Spoofing Legislation

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today issued a statement praising the passage of Senate Bill 514 to combat robocalls and “spoofing” calls. “Spoofing” allows scammers to disguise their identities, which makes it difficult for law enforcement to bring them to justice.

“Arkansans are fed up with incessant robocalls and scams,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “This legislation, passed unopposed in both houses, reinforces how determined Arkansans are to stop these illegal calls and creates a path for enforcement to hold the bad actors accountable.”

The Attorney General, working with Senator Jonathan Dismang and Representative Clint Penzo, proposed stiffer criminal penalties for robocalls and spoofing and a process for state oversight of telecommunication providers.


March 26, 2019

Rutledge Issues Statement on Passage of Farm Equipment Lemon Law

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today released the below statement following the Arkansas Legislature’s passage of the Farm Machinery Quality Assurance Act that will provide “lemon law” type protection to consumers in the purchase of new self-propelled farm machinery and equipment which do not conform to the manufacturer’s warranty and attempts to repair the problem fail.

“Farm equipment is a major and necessary expense for farmers, often costing thousands, even hundreds of thousands of dollars,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “But when that equipment doesn’t work and can’t be repaired, it can be disastrous. With the passage of the Farm Machinery Quality Assurance Act, farmers are no longer vulnerable to potentially devastating financial losses due to faulty equipment.”

The Farm Machinery Quality Assurance Act applies to new self-propelled equipment over 25 horsepower that is typically used for agricultural purposes. It requires the consumer to notify the manufacturer of nonconforming issues...
March 26, 2019

**Rutledge Hosts Retiree Resources Event in Fayetteville**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today hosted the first regional Rutledge Retiree Resources event in Fayetteville. The agenda included programs designed to educate senior citizens from northwest Arkansas about how they can protect themselves from pervasive and vicious scam artists.

“Engaging Arkansas’s senior citizens in their hometowns is important to effectively communicate the multitude of ongoing scams,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “In-person educational events will save Arkansans money and help us put a stop to the scammers who are looking for a quick buck.”

Attendees heard from Attorney General’s office staff about protecting themselves from scams and identity theft, proper prescription drug disposal, resources regarding nursing homes and home care, and protecting finances.

Registration is available for additional Rutledge Retiree Resources events that are scheduled for April 29 in Jonesboro and June 25 in DeWitt.


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March 04, 2019

**Rutledge Celebrates National Consumer Protection Week**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge released the following statement to kick off National Consumer Protection Week.

“My office is dedicated to protecting Arkansans from con artists and criminals. I am sick of bad actors constantly adapting to find new ways to scam hard-working consumers. National Consumer Protection Week is an opportunity to educate Arkansans about common scams.”

Rutledge will be highlighting common scams and complaints received by the Attorney General’s office this week on social media.

Consumers who believe they have been scammed or would like to file a complaint can reach the Attorney General’s office at (501) 682-2007 or online at ArkansasAG.gov.


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**CALIFORNIA**

March 21, 2019
Attorney General Becerra Issues Tax Tips for Consumers Ahead of Filing Deadline for Tax Season

SACRAMENTO – Ahead of the April 15 deadline to file income tax returns, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced tips to encourage safe tax filing and preparation, and prevent tax-related identity theft. Each year, millions of California taxpayers file their taxes and many look forward to receiving tax refunds. Unfortunately, tax season also draws scam artists who prey on individuals who may need help with filing their taxes. This alert explains some of the most common tax season scams and provides Californians with resources to find reputable tax help.

“During tax season, hardworking Californians are more vulnerable to identity theft and other scams,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Our website offers consumers a wealth of information to help make filing taxes a little easier and safer. I encourage consumers to take the time to review these and other tips and the resources available on our site at www.oag.ca.gov.” …


March 20, 2019

Attorney General Becerra Announces Educational Webinar to Help Charitable Organizations Comply with the Law

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced an initiative to educate California charitable organizations. The initiative, Operation Donate with Honor, comes after Attorney General Becerra distributed more than 550 delinquency notices, and approximately 200 cease and desist letters targeted to veteran charities between July 2018 and the present.

“Generous and hardworking Americans should never have to worry about their donations falling into the hands of fraudulent charitable organizations,” said Attorney General Becerra. “Our office remains committed to ensuring that charities have the proper tools to succeed and serve Californians. This educational initiative is designed to help legitimate charities come into compliance with state laws. We will vigorously investigate and prosecute charities that break the law while falsely claiming to help vulnerable communities.”

Since taking office, Attorney General Becerra has been committed to protecting charitable assets and donors. He has also worked to ensure that charities understand and can...


March 19, 2019

Attorney General Becerra Opposes the Federal Government’s Plan to Delay Payday Rule

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today joined a coalition of 25 attorneys general in submitting a comment letter opposing a proposal by the federal Consumer
Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to formally delay implementation of 2017 regulations governing payday, vehicle title, and certain high-cost installment loans (Payday Rule). The Payday Rule protects consumers from the worst harms associated with short-term payday lending. It requires underwriters to ensure that borrowers have the ability to repay their loans and prohibits lenders from employing abusive tactics while seeking repayment. The Rule safeguards borrowers from predatory payday lenders who often target borrowers of color, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. The CFPB proposal would delay compliance requirements of the Payday Rule until November 20, 2020, putting hundreds of thousands of borrowers at risk of unnecessary fees and exploitation by unscrupulous lenders with limited oversight for another year – nearly two years after the...


March 08, 2019
**Attorney General Becerra Points to Consumer Tips and Resources for National Consumer Protection Week**

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a reminder to consumers of the many resources and tools available from the California Department of Justice to help them protect themselves. These resources are available on [www.oag.ca.gov/consumers](http://www.oag.ca.gov/consumers)...


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**COLORADO**

March 28, 2019
**Weiser: Absent federal law, Colorado should take steps to protect an open internet**

Mar. 28, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) — In a letter to the chairman of the House State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, Attorney General Phil Weiser today gave his support to SB19-078, “Concerning the Protection of the Open Internet”. In absence of congressional action, states should provide consumer protections in the area of net neutrality, said Weiser.

“Senate Bill 19-078 is a well-crafted measure to exert more consumer protections for Coloradans. As the internet continues to be a more important and indispensable tool in our daily lives, SB 19-078 is one step that the State can take protect an open internet. I am grateful to Representatives Hansen and Herod, and Senators Bridges and Donovan for their leadership in bringing this important bill forward,” Weiser says in his letter to Chairman Chris Kennedy. Weiser’s letter to the committee chairman can be found here.

March 19, 2019

**Attorney General Phil Weiser signs letter opposing CFPB efforts to delay Payday Lending consumer protections**

Mar. 19, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) – Today Attorney General Phil Weiser joined a coalition of 25 attorneys general urging the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other exploitative practices.

“We must protect borrowers in Colorado and the rest of the country from unfair, predatory payday lending practices. The CFPB is proposing to delay the ability-to-repay provision without an adequate justification. It is critical that the CFPB protect American consumers by holding payday lenders accountable and protecting vulnerable borrowers from spiraling costs and inevitable default,” Weiser said.

Payday lending is a type of short-term, high-interest loan given out to borrowers by a business, not a bank. While consumers with poor credit or little savings might initially see them as a ‘quick fix’ for a financial emergency because of how easily they can be acquired, payday loans usually carry...


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March 08, 2019

**Attorney General Phil Weiser takes lead in bipartisan effort to urge Congress to act against robocalls**

Mar. 8, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.)—Attorney General Phil Weiser has joined a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general representing 54 states and territories urging the U.S. Senate to pass the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act. This legislation would provide additional enforcement tools to the federal government and to state attorneys generals to crack down on unwanted robocalls. This move is the latest in a series of measures Weiser has taken to bring Colorado to the forefront of bipartisan efforts to address this challenge.

“In Colorado and across the country, unwanted robocalls are a real and growing menace. When it comes to stopping these annoying robocalls, our office is committed to cooperating across state, party, and agency lines to protect Colorado consumers. The TRACED Act is a step in the right direction, and I am proud to support it,” Weiser explained. ...


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March 04, 2019

**Kicking Off National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Phil Weiser Unveils Top 10 Consumer Complaints and Inquiries of 2018**
Mar. 4, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) — In recognition of National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Phil Weiser today unveiled a list of the top 10 consumer complaints of 2018. During the 2018 calendar year, consumers filed 9,110 complaints and inquiries with the Consumer Protection Section of the Office of the Attorney General.

“Consumer protection is central to the work of the Attorney General’s Office and it will be one of our core priorities. In the years ahead, our office will address a range of threats to consumers, including scams, financial fraud, collusion among competitors, and compromises to data privacy,” said Weiser. “Vigorous consumer protection is pro-business. In protecting consumers and celebrating responsible businesses, we are playing a crucial role in building trust in our government and in our free market system.”

The top 10 types of complaints and inquiries received in 2018 are: ...


CONNECTICUT

March 29, 2019
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL NOTIFIES FORMER ARGOSY, ART INSTITUTES STUDENTS OF LOAN FORGIVENESS OPTIONS

(Hartford, CT) – In letters to 49 Connecticut online students of two recently closed schools, the Office of the Attorney General provided information about federal student loan forgiveness options.

Argosy University and the Art Institutes abruptly closed on March 8 after the federal government revoked both schools' eligibility for federal student aid. Neither school had physical campuses located in Connecticut.

Students at those schools may be eligible to have their federal student loans cancelled and any amounts already paid reimbursed. Eligible students include those active at the time of the closure, and those who withdrew up to 120 days before the closure, who were not able to complete their program of study and have not transferred credits into a comparable program at another school.

"Office of the Attorney General is reaching out directly to all 49 Connecticut students enrolled in Argosy and Art Institutes online programs to make sure they are fully aware...


March 28, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL TONG, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WARN AGAINST FEE FOR BENEFITS SCHEME

(Hartford, CT) -- After becoming aware that Connecticut veterans have been charged potentially
illegal fees for preparation of veterans' benefit applications, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong and Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Thomas Saadi urged veterans and their families to immediately report such schemes and reminded the public that it is illegal to charge for preparation or presentation of veterans' benefit applications in most circumstances.

The Office of the Attorney General is aware of at least two veterans allegedly charged $500 and $750 to apply for benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Office of the Attorney General is reviewing those allegations and conferring with the United States Attorney's Office.

Federal laws govern the preparation and presentation of veterans' applications for benefits. Preparers must be accredited by the VA and they are generally prohibited from charging applicants for these services. Click here for a list of the State Department...


March 27, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL, REVENUE SERVICES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSIONERS WARN AGAINST FRAUD, IDENTITY THEFT AND SCAMS

Attorney General William Tong, Revenue Services Commissioner Scott Jackson, and Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle Seagull cautioned taxpayers today to remain vigilant on multiple fronts about identity theft, unscrupulous preparers, and scams related to the filing of their tax returns. With changing technology, fraudsters and cybercriminals are deploying more sophisticated methods in hopes of confusing taxpayers, stealing their personal information, and taking their money.

However, taxpayers can take a number of commonsense steps to keep their identity and personal information safe. Free tax filing assistance is available from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Department of Revenue Services (DRS), and community organizations. In addition, as explained below, taxpayers should be aware of a provision in state law, effective January 1, 2019, that establishes qualifications for paid income tax preparers.

"Don't ever let a scammer cheat you out of your tax refund. The Department of Revenue Services and the Internal Revenue Service will...


March 21, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL TONG ISSUES CONSUMER WARNING REGARDING SPORTS MEDIA ADVERTISING

Attorney General William Tong today warned consumers to avoid business with Texas-based
Sports Media Advertising (SMA), which appears to be actively engaged in scams targeting Connecticut businesses and schools.
SMA is a Fort Worth, Texas-based business that has also been known as Boost Sports Integrative Media, LLC and High School Sports Advertising. The company allegedly targets particular communities by contacting local businesses claiming to be working with a local high school sports team to create various items such as tee shirts, cups, banners, etc., to promote their sports program. The businesses are offered "sponsorship" opportunities to have their logos displayed on these items, together with the school logo, for a price of $300-$1,000. The high schools reportedly know nothing about this arrangement and do not receive any of the money.
The Office of the Attorney General is actively investigating the allegations. "This company appears to be shamelessly bilking money from Connecticut businesses by...


March 19, 2019
AG TONG OPPOSES CFPB EFFORT TO DELAY PROTECTIONS FROM PAYDAY Lenders
Attorney General William Tong today joined a coalition of 25 states led by North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein in urging the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday, vehicle title, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending.
In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they’d have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. While the rule went into effect in early 2018, compliance was delayed to Aug. 19, 2019 to give lenders time to develop systems and policies.
CFPB has now proposed to further delay compliance to Nov. 19, 2020 – more than three years after the regulation was finalized. At the same time, CFPB is reviewing another rule that would altogether rescind this one. Together, these actions would put at risk hard-fought borrower protections. ...


March 14, 2019
AG TONG STATEMENT ON SUPREME COURT’S RULING THAT SAYS SANDY HOOK FAMILIES WILL HAVE THEIR DAY IN COURT TO PROVE REMINGTON VIOLATED CUTPA
Attorney General William Tong released the following statement after the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled today that Sandy Hook families should be given the opportunity to prove that Remington — the maker of the AR-15 used by the gunman in the massacre — violated the
Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA) by marketing a military-style weapon to civilians.
"I am thankful that the families who have suffered unconscionable losses can have their day in court and can hopefully find some justice. The military-type gun designed to inflict maximum lethality used by Adam Lanza to kill innocent children and adults on that tragic day should not have been marketed to civilians. Our consumer laws were designed to protect consumers from harmful commercial activities of the type alleged in the complaint," said Attorney General Tong. The Office of the Attorney General filed an amicus brief in April 2017 that argued Sandy Hook families did not...


March 08, 2019

**ATTORNEY GENERAL TONG URGES CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ROBOCALLS**

Attorney General William Tong this week joined a coalition of attorneys general representing 54 states and territories urging the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. The coalition of attorneys general, led by North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald, and Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood, sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey.

"Incessant robocalls are more than just intrusive and obnoxious, they have resulted in billions of dollars in harm to consumers and the economy. I strongly support all federal action to strengthen our ability as state attorneys general to protect consumers from these illegal calls, and to hold robocallers accountable," said Attorney...


March 01, 2019

**CONSUMERS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK**

National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) is held each year in the first full week of March (this year, March 3 to 9). The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP), the Office of the Attorney General, and Better Business Bureau Serving Connecticut are encouraging consumers to participate. It’s an incredibly busy time of year, but there are a few quick things that consumers can do this week to make sure they’re protected all year.

Clean up your computer and your smartphone: More and more cases of identity theft and
security breaches originate from downloading cell phone apps and computer programs. Breaches can also occur when we correspond with companies or individuals who are pretending to be legitimate businesses, but who are not. Sharing information with the wrong entity can mean your information is taken, bought, and sold to people who misuse your information. ...


March 21, 2019
Attorney General’s Office Warns Delawareans About Rental Scams
The Consumer Protection Unit of the Delaware Department of Justice warns Delawareans that to be wary of scams when looking for a vacation rental this summer. The scammers operating rental schemes find legitimate rental postings and capture the information and photos of the property, and then list it on Craigslist or other online advertising platforms. Unsuspecting consumers looking for a good deal on a vacation rental find the bogus posting, send a deposit, and receive confirmation of their rental, only to arrive and find other people in the home, leaving the consumers unable to gain access to the property they believed they had rented, and nowhere to go.

Rental home scams also occur with regard to longer term residential rentals. Prospective tenants in these scenarios may be shown an available property where the scammers have changed the locks to unlawfully gain access. The scammers will collect a security deposit and first...


March 19, 2019
During Peak Tax Season, Consumer Protection Unit Urges Delawareans to be on Guard Against IRS Scams
With IRS W-2 forms already issued by many employers, the 2019 tax season is underway, and the Department of Justice’s Consumer Protection Unit is cautioning Delaware consumers and employers to be on guard for fake IRS phone call scams and IRS Form W-2 email phishing scams that are targeting Delaware employers, including retail businesses, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and law firms.

IRS Phone Call Scam
In a typical IRS phone scam, a caller pretends to work for the Internal Revenue Service (or sometimes the U.S. Treasury Department), and tells the intended victim that the IRS will imminently be filing suit against the victim, or threatens the intended victim with arrest or some other kind of punishment, and the only way to avoid the lawsuit or arrest is to immediately pay a sum of money, usually via a pre-paid debit card or a money order, or even
March 05, 2019

DOJ Consumer Protection Unit Warns Delawareans About Scam Utility Calls

The Department of Justice’s Consumer Protection Unit (CPU) warns Delawareans to be wary of threatening collection calls purporting to be from Delmarva Power. The callers allege that the consumer has an overdue balance and threaten to have utility services shut off within minutes if large sums of money are not provided. The callers demand these large payments in MoneyPak cards, iTunes gift cards, or other prepaid card products. The callers may also attempt to obtain certain personal or financial information from consumers as well.

Delaware utility consumers should be cautious of any phone call where the caller employs threats to immediately turn off utility services. Current customers of Delmarva Power, or other authorized utility providers, should ask the caller to provide information that legitimate employees of actual utility providers should have readily available – including the utility account number, property address, and account holder’s name – in order to verify their...

Original Press Release: https://news.delaware.gov/2019/03/05/us/

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 21, 2019

AG Racine Introduces Legislation to Protect District Residents' Personal Data

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced the introduction of the Security Breach Protection Amendment Act of 2019, which would modernize the District’s data breach law and strengthen protections for residents’ personal information. AG Racine has introduced this bill in response to major data breaches that have put tens of millions of consumers, and hundreds of thousands of District residents, at risk of identity theft and other types of fraud. The new legislation would expand legal protections to cover additional types of personal information, require companies that deal with personal information to implement safeguards, include additional reporting requirements for companies that suffer a data breach, and require companies that expose consumers’ social security numbers to offer two years of free identity theft protection.

“Data breaches and identify theft continue to pose major threats to District residents and consumers nationwide,” said AG Racine. “The District’s current data security law...

CONSUMER ALERT: Tips to Avoid Tax Scams and Identity Theft as Filing Deadline Approaches

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert ahead of the federal tax filing deadline to help Floridians avoid common tax scams. From now through the April 15 filing deadline, identity thieves and scammers will be ramping up efforts to steal taxpayers returns and sensitive identification information.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Tax season is a busy time for identity thieves and scammers as they look for ways to steal returns and the identities of taxpayers. When filing, Floridians should take precautions to protect their identities and sensitive tax-filing information to avoid falling victim to these fraudsters, and if anyone encounters a scam they should immediately report it to our office.”

The following are tips to help taxpayers avoid identity theft and scams when preparing and filing taxes: ...

March 14, 2019

CONSUMER ALERT: Argosy University Students Eligible for Loan Discharges

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—The Florida Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division today issued a Consumer Alert to inform Florida students of now-defunct Argosy University of available options. The semester began with approximately 540 students enrolled at Argosy University’s Tampa campus. The for-profit school is now in receivership, and the United States Department of Education has found that Argosy mishandled federal student aid funds and student stipends.

Argosy’s assets are now in receivership and options are currently available to students. Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Argosy failed its students and now hundreds of Floridians trying to achieve a higher education are scrambling to figure out how to complete their degrees. Argosy students need to carefully examine their options and act promptly to pursue relief through the United States Department of Education.”

The USDOE’s Office of Federal Student Aid has set up a webpage with information about remedies available to Argosy students. To view the page, click...

March 05, 2019
Attorney General Moody Urges Congress to Act Against Illegal Robocalls

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today urged the United States Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. The Act is designed to reduce the number of illegal robocalls and fight spoofing—the practice of using technology to disguise a caller’s phone number. A coalition of 54 attorneys general today sent a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Floridians and people around the country are receiving billions of robocalls every year. Often these robocalls are pitching phony products, sham services or spurious sweepstakes in an effort to trick people into parting with their money. While we continue to fight illegal robocalls on multiple fronts, we need Congress to pass the TRACED Act to help bolster our efforts to better protect consumers in Florida and nationwide.”

The attorneys general stress in the letter that the TRACED...

March 04, 2019

Attorney General Moody Announces Senior Protection Team to Fight Fraud and Abuse

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today announced Florida’s Senior Protection Team, an intra-agency group of experts working together to fight fraud and abuse. The team is comprised of leading members from the Attorney General’s Office of Statewide Prosecution, Consumer Protection Division and Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. Seniors v. Crime and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement will also actively assist the team with investigations and outreach efforts.

The goal is to bring attorneys and investigators specialized in fighting civil, criminal and health care fraud together to develop strategies to protect Floridians 60 and older. The team is already meeting with experts and stakeholders across the state to develop aggressive ways to combat fraud against seniors.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This team of highly-skilled attorneys and investigators is laser focused on identifying, investigating and eliminating fraud and abuse harming Florida seniors. More than five million seniors call Florida home. Many of these...

March 01, 2019

GEORGIA
Attorney General Chris Carr Celebrates National Consumer Protection Week
ATLANTA, GA – In preparation for National Consumer Protection Week, which is March 3-9, Attorney General Chris Carr encourages all Georgia consumers to take some time to stay up to date on the latest scams and learn about resources that can be used to educate themselves.
“The Office of the Attorney General offers two separate consumer protection guides. One is the Georgia Consumer Protection Guide for Older Adults and the other is the Georgia Military Consumer Protection Guide. In addition, consumer.georgia.gov and ConsumerEd.georgia.gov contain a great deal of helpful information on a wide variety of consumer topics,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “We encourage all Georgia consumers to devote some time this week to learning the tools to better protect themselves when they engage in consumer transactions.”
The Department of Law’s Consumer Protection Division is also taking this opportunity to debunk the following common consumer myths ...


HAWAII
March 19, 2019
Hawaii Attorney General Opposes CFPB Effort to Delay Protections from Payday Lenders
HONOLULU – Attorney General Clare E. Connors today urged the CFPB to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. Attorney General Connors is part of a coalition of 25 states, led by North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, taking today’s action. "Exploitative consumer lending practices directly harm Hawaii residents," said Attorney General Connors. "We are urging the CFPB to require compliance immediately because lenders should not be allowed to inflict damage on our local community through financial products that trap borrowers in cycles of debt."
In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to August 19, 2019, to give lenders...


March 05, 2019
Hawaii Attorney General Supports Enactment of the TRACED Act
HONOLULU – Attorney General Clare E. Connors today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of attorneys general from 54 states and territories, led by

"Telemarketing calls and robocalls are a daily source of frustration for Hawaii residents," said Attorney General Connors. "The bipartisan TRACED Act prioritizes call authentication protocols in an effort to reduce these unwanted calls. It also authorizes creation of a working group focused on further limiting the impacts of these intrusions. We support this legislation and...


IDAHO
March 05, 2019
Wasden Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls
(Boise) – Attorney General Lawrence Wasden today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act. The legislation would curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in support of the legislation. The bipartisan proposal is sponsored by Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Ed Markey (D-MA).

“These maddening calls represent a technological plague that seemingly affects everyone with a phone,” Wasden says. “But technology exists to fight back, and we should do everything we can to use it. The TRACED Act would do just that, and I urge federal lawmakers to support this legislation.”

If passed and signed into law, the TRACED Act would require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls. It would also create an interagency working group...


ILLINOIS
March 20, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL OPPOSES CFPB EFFORT TO DELAY PROTECTIONS FROM PAYDAY LENDERS
Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 25 attorneys general, today urged the CFPB to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending,
vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending.
In comments submitted Monday, Raoul and the attorneys general argue that the CFPB’s proposed rule would arbitrarily delay implementation of regulations that would require high-cost loan lenders to assess borrowers’ ability to repay. The proposed rule would delay commonsense protections the CFPB announced after a comprehensive five-year review process and were scheduled to be enacted last year.
“The payday loan industry has notoriously targeted low-income residents in need of cash quickly for high-cost loans that are extremely difficult to repay,” Raoul said. “The CFPB must not delay these commonsense regulations to ensure that loans are based on borrowers’ ability to pay while prohibiting lenders from engaging in abusive repayment practices.”

March 06, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES TOP 10 LIST OF CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

Chicago — In recognition of National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced his office’s list of Top 10 consumer complaints for 2018. For the first time since 2000, complaints related to home repairs and remodeling topped the list, after years of debt-related complaints being the most frequently received by the Attorney General’s Office. Last year, the Attorney General’s Office received 21,352 complaints, and home repair and remodeling complaints ranked No. 1, with 2,261 complaints. Consumer debt and identity theft complaints dropped compared to previous years, with consumer debt ranking second at 1,907 complaints, followed by identity theft ranking third at 1,899 complaints.
“During Consumer Protection Week, I encourage Illinois residents to be informed consumers, particularly as they plan ahead for home repair projects,” Raoul said. “As spring approaches, and more homeowners begin renovations and other home repair work, I urge them to first check out the free resources the...
in Illinois and nationally,” Raoul said. “I encourage the Senate to pass the TRACED Act and help limit the volume of these nuisance calls people receive.”

In the letter, Raoul and the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help...

Original Press Release:
http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2019_03/20190305c.html

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**INDIANA**

March 05, 2019

**AG Curtis Hill urges Congress to take action against robocalls**

Attorney General Curtis Hill today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune, R-S.D., and Ed Markey, D-Mass.

“Everyone deserves to be able to enjoy peace and privacy without the interruption of unwanted calls,” Attorney General Hill said. “We need stronger measures aimed at stopping illegal robocalling. This legislation would be a definite step in the right direction.”

In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls and creates...


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**IOWA**

March 18, 2019

**Miller opposes CFPB effort to delay protections from payday lenders**

DES MOINES — Attorney General Tom Miller urged the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. Iowa is part of a coalition of 25 states filing comments with the bureau.

"The delay in the protections will leave consumers unprotected from many types of exploitative loans, and it could embolden lenders who would seek to circumvent the laws," Miller said.

In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they’d have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking
repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to Aug. 19, 2019, to give lenders time to develop systems and policies. CFPB has now proposed to further delay compliance to Nov. 19, 2020, more than three years...


March 05, 2019

**Miller urges Congress to take action against robocalls**

DES MOINES — Attorney General Tom Miller urges the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing.


“Robocalls are the bane of our existence,” Miller said. “As AGs, we’re on the front lines of helping consumers who are harassed and scammed by these unwanted calls, many of which come from overseas. The problem demands a federal response.”

In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act would enable states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation would require voice service providers to implement a call authentication framework to help...


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**KANSAS**

March 25, 2019

**Consumer Corner: Beware of scammers posing as Publishers Clearing House**

Over the last several years, one of the most prevalent scams we have seen Kansans fall victim to is the lottery or sweepstakes scam.

Whether it’s a foreign lottery, sweepstakes or a government grant, scammers aim to lure people into sending money to pay for the taxes or processing fees now in exchange for the promise of a future “prize.” We always remind consumers that the Kansas Lottery is the only legitimate, legally operating lottery in Kansas, and you should never have to pay money upfront to claim a prize.

One specific scam revolves around sweepstakes run by Publishers Clearing House, where scammers pose as someone from the direct marketing company letting you know that you’ve won a prize in one of their many sweepstakes. To be clear, Publishers Clearing House itself is a legitimate company founded in the 1950s to do door to door sales, which later began promoting sweepstakes in...
March 05, 2019

**AG Derek Schmidt urges Congress to toughen law against robocalls**

TOPEKA – (March 5, 2019) – Attorney General Derek Schmidt today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and caller-ID spoofing.

Schmidt, along with the attorneys general from all 49 other states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories, sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune, R-SD., and Ed Markey, D-Mass., and would require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls. The framework is being established by federal agencies, with the urging of state attorneys general, and the TRACED Act would make it mandatory.

The bill also would create an interagency working group to identify additional actions to reduce robocalls and hold telemarketers and robocallers accountable.

“Any meaningful solution to the...
March 18, 2019

Beshear: Students of Two shuttered For-Profit Colleges may apply for Federal Loan Forgiveness

FRANKFORT, KY. (March 18, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today announced that Kentuckians attending two recently closed for-profit online schools may be eligible for federal student loan forgiveness.

Argosy University and Art Institutes, abruptly closed March 8 after the federal government revoked Argosy’s eligibility for federal student aid.

Eligible students include active students, and those who withdrew up to 120 days before the closure, who were not able to complete their program of study and have not transferred credits into a comparable program at another school.

“My office is reaching out directly to notify more than 80 impacted students whose schools have closed,” said Beshear. “We are providing information and support to help ensure each student has the resources they need to apply for federal loan forgiveness if they choose to do so.”

Beshear said neither school had brick-and-mortar campuses in Kentucky, but both enrolled Kentuckians in their online programs. Both schools are...


March 06, 2019

Beshear Warns of Widespread ‘Suspended’ Social Security Number Scam

FRANKFORT, KY. (March 6, 2019) – Following a warning to Kentuckians earlier this year about a surge in scams through tax season, Attorney General Andy Beshear said there are widespread reports of ‘suspended’ Social Security number scams.

“This tax season scammers are working overtime to steal Social Security numbers, identities and tax refunds,” said Beshear. “As the Social Security scam continues to spread and claim victims, I want Kentuckians to know they should never hesitate to hang up on a caller who asks for their Social Security number — no matter who they say they are.”

A Jefferson County resident recently received the scam call, which appeared to be from an actual Social Security Administration (SSA) phone number. The scammer claimed the victim’s Social Security number had been suspended due to suspicious activity and to use her Social Security number again she must verify it and other personal information or risk arrest.

Over...


March 05, 2019

91
Beshear Wants More Action Taken to Stop Scam Calls
FRANKFORT, KY. (March 5, 2019) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today urged the U.S. Senate to enact legislation to curb illegal scam phone calls and caller ID spoofing.
Beshear, joining 53 of the nation’s attorneys general, sent a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey.
“Kentuckians are fed up with the constant barrage of scam calls,” said Beshear. “I am joining a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from across the country to support the TRACED Act, which, if enacted, will aid states, federal regulators and telecom providers in fighting illegal scam calls.”
The legislation would require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls and create an interagency working group to take additional actions to reduce scam calls and hold telemarketers and robocallers...


LOUISIANA
March 29, 2019
Protecting Preexisting Healthcare Conditions and Other Louisiana Patient Protections,
Attorney General Landry, House Speaker Barras, Senate Health & Welfare Committee Chairman Mills, and Insurance Commissioner Donelon Collaborate on New Legislation
BATON ROUGE, LA – New Legislation has been introduced in the Louisiana Legislature to provide for the availability of guaranteed healthcare coverage for preexisting conditions and other patient protections should a ruling on the Constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act be upheld.
Following extensive discussions between Attorney General Landry, Speaker Barras, Health and Welfare Senate Chairman Mills, and Insurance Commissioner Donelon; new Legislation has been submitted by Senator Fred Mills as a framework in addressing preexisting healthcare conditions and patient protections.
The bill entitled, "Health Care Coverage for Louisiana Families Protection Act", prohibits the denial of healthcare insurance for preexisting conditions, eliminates lifetime limits on the dollar value of benefits and prohibits annual limits on the dollar value of essential benefits, allows for healthcare coverage on parent policies for any child until the age of 26, and ensures that any healthcare plan provide for essential health benefits including ambulance care, emergency services,...

MAINE
March 11, 2019
**Attorney General Frey Announces Start of Wells Fargo Consumer Redress Review Program**

AUGUSTA - Attorney General Aaron Frey today announced that Wells Fargo has begun a consumer redress review program through which consumers who have not yet been made whole through other remediation programs already in place can seek to have their inquiry or complaint reviewed by a Wells Fargo escalation team for possible relief.

"This is an important step forward and will allow Maine consumers who have been harmed by Wells Fargo's practices seek redress," said Frey. "I hope that the national settlement and this program for consumer redress send a message to all institutions that taking advantage of consumers will not be tolerated."

The consumer redress review program was a key component of the December 2018 settlement with the attorneys general of all 50 states and the District of Columbia to resolve claims that the bank violated state consumer protection laws by (1) opening millions of unauthorized accounts and enrolling customers into...


MARYLAND
March 20, 2019
**Attorney General Frosh Joins Coalition Opposing CFPB Effort to Delay Consumer Protections from Payday Lenders**

BALTIMORE, MD (March 20, 2019) – Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh today joined a coalition of 25 attorneys general in urging the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending.

“The CFPB needs to prioritize its mission of helping consumers, instead of bowing to the wishes of lenders,” said Attorney General Frosh. “While the CFPB delays protections, consumers are left vulnerable to predatory lenders whose fundamental mission is to expand their own financial interests, often at great costs to their clients.”

In 2017, the CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they would have the ability to repay loans, while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed until August 19, 2019, to...

MASSACHUSETTS

March 05, 2019

Press Release AG Healey Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls
Boston — During National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Maura Healey today joined a coalition of 54 attorneys general in urging the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation co-sponsored by Massachusetts Senator Edward J. Markey to curb illegal and harmful robocalls.

The attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act, which would enable states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat illegal robocalls by participating in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls.

“Telecom companies have the tools to stop billions and billions of robocalls, but they aren’t doing their job,” said AG Healey. “I want to thank Senator Markey for this important bill to stop the ceaseless onslaught of robocalls.”

“There are no blue robocalls or red robocalls, just unwanted robocalls. This bipartisan effort from all...”


March 04, 2019

AG’s Office to Host Events Across the State for National Consumer Protection Week
Boston — In celebration of the 21st annual National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Maura Healey today announced a series of events designed to help empower and educate Massachusetts residents.

“The AG’s Office advocates for consumers every day, arming them with the tools they need to make informed decisions and protect themselves from bad actors,” said AG Healey. “This month, we will travel throughout the state to meet with consumers, teach them about their rights, and connect them with the resources we have available through our office.”

During National Consumer Protection Week, the AG’s Office will offer consumer education events across the state on topics ranging from consumer awareness, scams, senior consumer rights, and auto laws. A complete list of consumer protection events being held throughout March is available here.

Each year, the AG’s Office provides direct assistance to thousands of consumers across Massachusetts. AG Healey’s Consumer Advocacy & Response Division (CARD) directly...

March 19, 2019

**MI AG Nessel Issues Updated Consumer Alert on Towing Practices**

LANSING – Following several complaints about Michigan towing companies, Attorney General Dana Nessel today issued an updated consumer alert to better educate Michiganders on the state’s towing laws. The updated alert includes information and how to file a complaint about unlawful towing and unreasonable fees.

“Having your car towed without your knowledge is not only disruptive, it’s expensive and creates all kinds of additional problems – financial and logistical. That’s why it’s important Michiganders know their rights,” Nessel said.

Nessel’s consumer alert outlines three common scenarios for towing a vehicle; at the direction of law enforcement; a private property owner; or the owner of the vehicle. For tows not done at the vehicle owner’s request, towing fees are typically set by an agreement between the police agency or private property owner and towing company. Vehicle owners should contact the agency that requested the towing to verify its fees. If the vehicle is...

- Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-492348--.00.html

March 19, 2019

**MI AG Dana Nessel Joins Multi-State Coalition to Protect Consumers from Payday Lender Abuse**

LANSING – Joining a coalition of 23 states and the District of Columbia, Attorney General Dana Nessel today urged the Federal Consumer Protection Financial Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending. The joint letter sent by the states today cites CFPB’s own findings that show the many ways the short-term payday and title lending model is broken. A copy of the letter can be found here.

“My office has a responsibility to act when Michiganders are at risk of deceitful and abusive business practices,” Nessel said. “By delaying these protections, more consumers risk becoming victims of predatory and misleading tactics by payday lenders, and that’s more than enough reason for Michigan to step in and speak out.”

CFPB announced a new rule in 2017 that would help protect borrowers and ensure they would have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using...

- Original Press Release: https://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-359-82916_81983_47203-492428--.00.html

March 11, 2019

**AG Nessel and DIFS Director Fox Urge Michiganders Impacted by Wolverine Solutions Group Data Breach to Take Extra Precautions**
LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel and the Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) Director Anita G. Fox today urged Michiganders affected by the data breach sustained by Detroit-based Wolverine Solutions Group to take extra precautions to help safeguard their information that may have been compromised.

It is believed the information of more than 600,000 Michiganders may have been compromised by the breach, including customers of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Health Alliance Plan, McLaren Health Care, Three Rivers Health, and North Ottawa Community Health System. Wolverine Solutions Group says it has mailed letters to all impacted individuals. According to the company website, exposed information could include names, addresses, dates of birth, social security numbers, insurance contract information and numbers, phone numbers, and medical information. The company says it does not believe personal information was extracted. Data breaches are increasingly common in a highly technological society. On average, there...

March 04, 2019
Nessel Releases Annual List of Top 10 Michigan Consumer Complaints
LANSING – Attorney General Dana Nessel today recognized National Consumer Protection Week by releasing her office’s Top 10 Consumer Complaints for 2018 to help consumers make well-informed decisions about where to spend their money. In 2018, the Michigan Department of Attorney General received a total of nearly 9,000 consumer complaints.

“This week, we’re reminding Michigan consumers of the tools and resources our office provides to protect Michiganders from scammers and unscrupulous businesses and organizations,” Nessel said. “Michiganders work hard for their money and as the state’s chief consumer advocate, it is up to us to help them understand their consumer rights and protect them from bad actors.”

Nessel’s Top 10 list is compiled by analyzing the nearly 9,000 written complaints filed with the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection team in 2018. The department recovered more than $1.6 million in consumer refunds, forgiven debts and state recoveries in 2018.

Consumers can submit a complaint...

MINNESOTA
March 20, 2019
Attorney General Ellison opposes move to delay protecting people from payday lenders
March 20, 2019 (SAINT PAUL) — Attorney General Keith Ellison has urged the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses
in payday lending, vehicle-title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. Attorney General Ellison joined 24 other states in a letter that urges the CFPB not to delay even further a rule to that effect, first finalized in 2017, that is scheduled to be implemented later this year.

“Too many people face a special struggle in affording their lives and living with dignity: the struggle to keep up with abusive lending practices that drive folks further into debt,” Attorney General Ellison said. “Two years ago, the CFPB finalized a rule to protect people from exploitation in payday lending and other practices that would give my office more tools to help people afford their lives. Now, though, they want to put off implementing...


MISSISSIPPI

March 05, 2019

AG Hood Leads National Support of Federal Legislation Combatting Illegal Robocalls

Attorney General Jim Hood is taking another step in stopping robocalls by supporting federal legislation known as the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act (TRACED).

The TRACED Act would assist in combating illegal robocalls by requiring industry-wide implementation of call authentication protocols. Also known as STIR/SHAKEN, this framework helps voice providers prevent spoofed calls because each telephone service provider connecting the call will obtain a digital certificate verifying the calling number. The legislation would also establish an Interagency Working Group, protect carriers who inadvertently block legitimate calls, and penalize people who repeatedly seek access to phone numbers for illegal purposes.

“I don’t know a person in Mississippi who isn’t fed up with the endless amount of robocalls, and as attorney general, this is one more step I’m taking to put an end to it,” General Hood said. “This legislation has broad bipartisan support because it’s something that is affecting everyone.” ...


MISSOURI

March 29, 2019

AG Schmitt Issues Consumer Alert Regarding Facebook’s Data Management

Jefferson City, Mo. - In light of recent media reports of Facebook storing millions of passwords in plain text, Attorney General Schmitt encourages Missourians to take this opportunity to change and/or strengthen their Facebook passwords.
“These reports of Facebook’s data mismanagement are certainly unsettling, and I want to ensure that Missourians are aware and are taking appropriate steps to secure their information,” said AG Schmitt. “Protecting Missourians’ consumer data and privacy is one of the top priorities of this office. We will continue to monitor the situation moving forward.”

Log into your Facebook account and go to Settings. Select “Security and Login” and scroll down to change your password. If you used the same password for other online accounts (e.g. online banking) as you did for Facebook, you may consider changing your password for those online accounts as well.

Additionally, you can use the Security and Login page to check when, where, and...


March 22, 2019

**AG Schmitt Renews Warnings of Scams, Price Gouging in Wake of Flooding**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Following Governor Parson’s declaration of a state of emergency due to the flooding in certain parts of Missouri, Attorney General Schmitt renewed his warning to Missourians regarding price gouging and scams. Earlier this week, AG Schmitt warned citizens about construction fraud, charity fraud, and price gouging. During times of emergency and natural disasters, scammers and unscrupulous businesses and individuals take advantage of the displacement and devastation.

“Unfortunately, scammers and unscrupulous businesses see natural disasters as a way to take advantage of our state’s most vulnerable. I’m renewing my warning to Missourians – stay safe during the flooding, be hyper vigilant when shopping for essentials, and be thorough before beginning repairs,” said AG Schmitt. “Don’t let scammers worsen your situation with a stolen identity, money, or information. Follow the tips listed below and report any suspicious behavior to our Consumer Protection hotline.”

General Schmitt offers the following...


March 19, 2019

**AG Schmitt Warns of Scams After Flooding**

Jefferson City, Mo. - In the wake of major flooding in Missouri, Attorney General Eric Schmitt today released a list of tips and warnings to protect Missourians who have been affected by the flooding from scams and frauds in the coming weeks and months.

“Unfortunately, there are scammers who see a natural disaster as a way to take advantage of Missourians when they are vulnerable,” Schmitt said. “I want to make sure citizens have the knowledge and tools to protect themselves from scam artists and to make good decisions during a difficult time.”
General Schmitt offers the following tips to assist citizens during times of disasters:
Construction fraud is very common following a disaster.
Get everything in writing. Thoroughly review your contract. Know the start and end date.
Research the company before you sign a contract. Get all their contact information.
Beware of anyone who looks or acts unprofessional...


March 08, 2019
AG Schmitt Warns of Scams and Fraud During Tax Season
Jefferson City, Mo. – On the last day of National Consumer Protection Week, AG Schmitt is warning Missouri consumers about possible scams that arise during tax season. Scammers and fraudsters take advantage of the confusion that may occur before filing taxes to steal money, identities, or secure information.
“Tax season is stressful enough for Missourians, they shouldn’t have to worry about falling victim to a scam or fraud,” said AG Schmitt. “If you’ve had personal information, money, or other secure data stolen from you by scammers or fraudsters, my office will do everything we can do bring those responsible to justice. Follow the tips listed to avoid scams and fraud, and report any suspicious behavior to our Consumer Protection Hotline.”
The Attorney General’s Office listed the following tips to avoid scams during tax season ...


March 04, 2019
AG Schmitt Announces Consumer Protection Week
Jefferson City, Mo. – Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced Consumer Protection Week, which will take place from March 4th to March 9th, to promote, discuss, and highlight the work that the Consumer Protection Section does to protect Missourians from scams and fraud. The Missouri Attorney General’s Office joins other Attorneys General as well as national partners such as the Federal Trade Commission in promoting Consumer Protection Week.
“It’s my job as Attorney General to protect all six million Missourians, and the Consumer Protection Section works tirelessly every day to address consumer complaints, educate consumers of possible scams or fraud, and bring action whenever possible,” said Schmitt. “When I see Missourians fall victims to scams or fraud, I’m going to do whatever possible to bring those responsible to justice. Consumer Protection Week is a great way to educate Missourians on their rights and what the Missouri Attorney General’s Office can do...

April 20 is Deadline for Using Shopko Gift Cards
It was recently announced that the Wisconsin-headquartered department store Shopko will be closing all of its remaining Montana stores and well over 100 stores nationwide after filing for bankruptcy protection in January of this year. Attorney General Tim Fox encourages Montanans who possess Shopko gift cards to use them as soon as possible. The Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Protection has been communicating with bankruptcy counsel for Shopko and has been informed that Shopko will be accepting those gift cards up to and until April 20, 2019.

➢ Original Press Release: https://dojmt.gov/april-20-is-deadline-for-using-shopko-gift-cards/

OCP, AARP Montana Team Up to Fight Fraud by Training Volunteer Outreach Specialists
The Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) and AARP Montana collaboratively trained volunteers today who will educate community groups in various Montana cities about scams, fraud, and identity theft. This effort, which is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation between AARP and an attorney general’s consumer protection team, will reach more older Montanans than either organization formerly has been able to using its own staff.
“When it comes to financial fraud and scams, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and education is the most effective tool for prevention,” Attorney General Tim Fox said. “While my Office of Consumer Protection has partnered for several years with AARP to educate seniors about how to avoid con artists, training AARP volunteers to help us amplify the message across our vast state makes good sense from both a budgetary and staffing point of view.”...


Attorney General Fox Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls
Montana Attorney General Tim Fox today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act.
“As attorneys general, we know that no single approach will solve this frustrating problem for consumers,” Attorney General Tim Fox said. “However, passage of the TRACED Act would add one more important tool to our arsenal as we fight robocalls and spoofing. This Act is part of the ongoing efforts of attorneys general nationwide to enforce do-not-call laws and protect consumers in our states from being harassed and scammed by unwanted robocalls,” Fox added. In their letter, the attorneys general wrote that the TRACED Act enables states, federal
regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal...


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**NEBRASKA**

March 26, 2019

**Attorney General Peterson Provides Information Regarding Contractors**

Lincoln— While compassion and support are customary in the aftermath of a natural disaster, some individuals and businesses may use this opportunity to prey on those in need. “Taking advantage of those affected by these devastating floods is inexcusable,” said Attorney General Doug Peterson. “But consumers can protect themselves and their property by keeping certain information in mind when selecting a home improvement contractor.”

Consider the following information to protect yourself and your property in the wake of recent flooding in Nebraska and surrounding states ...


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March 21, 2019

**Donating with Care 3D Consumer Alert & Checklist**

The Nebraska Attorney General applauds the efforts of the Nebraska Broadcasters Association spearheading a day of giving for those in need across our state. Tomorrow, the Nebraska Broadcasters Association is leading a joint initiative to allow Nebraskans an opportunity to contribute in response to recent weather damage and historic flooding.

To help Nebraskans donate with care, the Attorney General’s Office continues to distribute information to reinforce donations reach those in need. A downloadable checklist for giving and a radio 3D Alert PSA both promote giving wisely as well as distinguishing between legitimate charities and scams. These additional tools for citizens are available through Nebraska media and the Attorney General’s website https://protectthegoodlife.nebraska.gov/protect-yourself-response-flooding.

Those who suspect a charity scam should contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at https://protectthegoodlife.nebraska.gov or 800-727-6432.


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March 18, 2019

**Donate with Care in Response to Historic Flooding**

(Lincoln, NE) — Attorney General Doug Peterson reminds Nebraskans to donate with care and
avoid charity scams in response to recent weather damage and flooding.
“In the coming days, it is critical that we reach out and help our communities affected by the devastating floods,” said Attorney General Peterson. “One of my responsibilities is to help Nebraskans recognize and avoid disaster-related, fundraising scams.”
Following a few simple steps can help ensure that your donations reach those in need ...


March 08, 2019

Consumer Protection Week 3D Alert
This entire week, the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office has been updating their consumer protection website, ProtectTheGoodLife.Nebraska.Gov with educational materials in recognition of National Consumer Protection Week.
Today, the Attorney General is pleased to announce the launch of an additional educational tool, titled 3D Consumer Alerts. The 3D Consumer Alerts series is composed of 60-second educational radio spots written and produced by the Consumer Protection Division of the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office. The purpose of the series is to prevent the victimization of Nebraskans by arming them with the education and tools to Deter, Detect, and Defend (the 3Ds) against the frauds, scams, and other pressing consumer issues prevalent across our state. The twice-a-month Alerts will be distributed to all media outlets but will also extend as breaking news warrants. The broad spectrum of topics includes monitoring your credit report, hotel booking scams, and caller-ID spoofing. (See the attached document for a...


March 05, 2019

Attorney General Peterson Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls
Attorney General Peterson said, “State attorneys general are on the front lines of helping consumers who are harassed and scammed by unwanted calls. For years, we have worked with both our federal counterparts and industry participants to encourage the adoption of technological solutions in the fight against these calls. I am proud to support this legislation.”
In their letter, the attorneys general...
March 04, 2019

**Attorney General Announces National Consumer Protection Week**

Lincoln – In recognition of National Consumer Protection Week - a campaign that helps consumers understand their rights and make better-informed decisions – the Attorney General’s Office is focusing its efforts on helping Nebraskans detect and defend against tech support scams.

Each day during the week of March 4, the Attorney General will update ProtectTheGoodLife.Nebraska.gov with information on keeping your computer secure, identifying the red flags associated with these scams, and reporting them to law enforcement. These posts will include tips such as ...

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**NEVADA**

March 19, 2019

**Attorney General Aaron Ford Joins Effort to Protect Nevadans from Abusive Payday Lending**

Carson City, NV – Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford urged the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost consumer lending. AG Ford is joined by a coalition of 25 other attorneys general in this action.

In 2017, the CFPB announced a new rule that would protect borrowers and ensure they would have the ability to repay loans, while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics for repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to August 19, 2019, to give lenders time to develop systems and policies to comply. Now, the CFPB has proposed to further delay compliance to November 19, 2020, more than three years after the regulation was finalized. At the same time, the CFPB is reviewing another rule that would rescind this current rule altogether. ...

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March 07, 2019

**Attorney General Aaron Ford Advises Consumers on Tech Support Scams**

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford announced that his office joined
with attorneys general across the country, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other regulators in a nationwide crackdown on fraudsters who try to scam consumers into buying costly and unnecessary tech support and repair services. As part of this effort, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and the Department of Justice announced a sweep of elder fraud cases and focused particular attention on tech support scams as a major threat to senior citizens. ...

- Original Press Release:
  http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2019/Attorney_General_Aaron_Ford_Advises_Consumers_on_Tech_Support_Scams/

March 06, 2019

**Attorney General Aaron Ford Offers Tips for Staying Safe on Social Media**

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford advises Nevadans on how to use social media safely to avoid falling victim to scams. Scammers on social media take advantage of the platforms’ interactive features to ensnare users into sharing their personal or financial information.

“Social networking sites are a great tool to connect with family members and friends across the globe, but with that convenience comes added opportunities for scammers,” said AG Ford. “During National Protection Week and beyond, I encourage Nevadans to exercise caution, and to remember that everything you post on social media can be seen by friends and scammers alike.”

The following are a few examples of social media scams ...

- Original Press Release:
  http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2019/Attorney_General_Aaron_Ford_Offers_Tips_for_Staying_Safe_on_Social_Media/

March 06, 2019

**Attorney General Ford Joins Coalition Supporting Robocall-deterrence Legislation**

Carson City, NV – Attorney General Aaron D. Ford urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. AG Ford, along with a coalition of 53 other attorneys general, sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act.

“Scammers use robocalling technology to quickly and easily make millions of calls per day, resulting in consumers losing both money and time,” said AG Ford. “The TRACED Act is the first step to give regulators stronger tools to protect consumers from illegal calls.”

In their letter, the attorneys general stress that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block
unwanted calls and creates an...

- Original Press Release:
  http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2019/Attorney_General_Ford_Joins_Coalition_Supporting_Robocall-
deterrence_Legislation/

March 04, 2019

Attorney General Ford Warns Parents, Children of ‘Fortnite’ Online Game Scams

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford advises Nevadans to be wary of scams that prey upon users of the popular online game “Fortnite.” Users may play “Fortnite” online across multiple gaming and computer platforms where the objective is to be the last player standing in this survival game that pits users against zombie-like creatures. The game is rated as suitable for children aged 12 and over, but its mass popularity has unwittingly attracted scammers who trick young and experienced users alike into disclosing their personal and identifying data or their parents’ credit card and billing information.

“Scammers use clever ads to take advantage of unsuspecting people caught up in the game,” said AG Ford. “These ads look like the real thing, and players may not realize they’ve been scammed until it’s too late. I encourage users to be vigilant while playing this and any online games.” ...

- Original Press Release:

March 01, 2019

Attorney General Aaron Ford Celebrates National Consumer Protection Week

Carson City, NV – Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford and his Bureau of Consumer Protection will join attorneys general throughout the country to celebrate National Consumer Protection Week from March 3-9, 2019. This week is widely acknowledged as a time to help people understand their consumer rights and make well-informed decisions about caring for their personal and financial information.

Through National Consumer Protection Week, AG Ford re-emphasizes consumer protection tips and urges Nevadans to learn more about how to protect themselves against scams and theft of private information. This year, the Office of the Nevada Attorney General will focus on technology-related consumer protection issues. Consumer alerts and events throughout the week will address ways that Nevadans can protect themselves from some of the most common types of scams reported throughout the state.

“National Consumer Protection Week is a coordinated campaign to help consumers make informed decisions and protect themselves from fraud,” said...
NEW HAMPSHIRE

March 01, 2019
Protecting Yourself Against IRS-Related Scams During Tax Season
Concord, NH – Ahead of Consumer Protection Week, March 3-9, 2019, Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald urges New Hampshire residents to take added precautions to protect themselves from IRS-related scams which tend to increase during tax season. In 2017, the Attorney General's office received 471 reports related to IRS scams. In 2018, there were 984 such reports.

The Attorney General offers strategies individuals can employ today to better protect themselves and those most susceptible to scams including education, heightened awareness, and practicing added vigilance when answering unknown phone calls. Individuals most commonly report receiving unsolicited calls fraudulently claiming to be from the IRS and demanding payment for delinquent taxes. The callers typically ask for some sort of immediate payment and threaten arrest, wage garnishment or other forms of legal process to coerce the payment. ...

NEW JERSEY

March 11, 2019
Proposed Regulation – State Real Estate Appraiser Board
NEWARK – The State Real Estate Appraiser Board has proposed amendments and new rules to implement the Appraisal Management Company Act. The proposal implements P.L. 2017, c. 72, which establishes registration requirements for real estate appraisal management companies (AMCs) that employ, contract, retain, or otherwise utilize the services of licensed and certified real estate appraisers to provide appraisal services in New Jersey. ...
than a week to use Payless ShoeSource gift cards and store credit as the retail chain begins shuttering its U.S. stores.
The Topeka, Kansas company announced mid-February that it would file for bankruptcy and close all stores in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada.
Customer gift cards and store credit will be valid until March 11, and liquidation sales are expected to continue through the end of May, according to a statement from the company. “When stores declare bankruptcy, consumers must act quickly or risk losing the value in unused gift cards and store credit,” said Paul R. Rodriguez, Acting Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs. “We encourage New Jersey consumers to use any gift cards or store credit they may have at Payless ShoeSource before time runs out.”

Stores have already stopped accepting merchandise returns, customer coupons, and...

NEW MEXICO
March 19, 2019
AG Balderas Calls Opposes CFPB Effort to Delay Protections from Payday Lenders
Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas urged the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending, after a rule aimed at protecting borrowers from abusive lenders was delayed a second time. “President Trump’s Consumer Finance Protection Bureau is failing to deliver on its promise to protect New Mexican consumers,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “Yet another delay on this necessary piece of protection will be devastating for New Mexican families, and allow predatory payday lenders to take advantage of at-risk New Mexicans.”
In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they’d have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to Aug. 19, 2019, to...

NEW YORK
March 25, 2019
Attorney General James' Health Care Helpline Recovers More Than $2 Million In Restitution And Savings For Consumers
NEW YORK - Attorney General Letitia James today released a report detailing the work of the Office of the Attorney General’s Health Care Bureau’s Helpline, a free service offered by the
office that handled almost 2,000 consumer complaints during the past year – saving or returning more than $2.3 million in health care expenses to consumers. The service has also helped countless New Yorkers access medically necessary care or prescription medication previously denied to them.

“Health care is a basic right that all New Yorkers should have access to,” said Attorney General Letitia James. “This hotline has been an invaluable tool in helping us protect New Yorkers and ensure that they get the care they deserve and are not taken advantage of. If you believe you are being improperly billed or denied health care benefits, I urge you to reach out to our office for support.” ...


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**NORTH CAROLINA**

March 19, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Stein Leads Coalition to Protect Borrowers from Payday Lenders**

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today led a coalition of 25 states urging the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending.

“In North Carolina, we drove out the payday lenders who hurt working people with loan shark interest rates,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “I urge the CFPB to protect borrowers from these abusive loans that put borrowers on a debt treadmill and, all too frequently, lead to default.”

In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they’d have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to Aug. 19, 2019, to give lenders time to develop systems and policies. CFPB has...


March 13, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Stein Reaches $274,000 Settlement with Hurricane Florence Price Gougers**

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today announced a $274,000 settlement with Georgia Tree Company LLC to resolve a price gouging lawsuit for excessively-priced tree removal work done after Hurricane Florence. Today’s settlement is one of the largest price gouging settlements by the North Carolina Department of Justice, and will provide full restitution to 23 North Carolina homeowners for which the Georgia-based tree removal service company did
work. The agreement also prohibits the company from collecting payment from two other consumers and from doing further tree work in North Carolina.

“This out-of-state operator took advantage of people recovering from a devastating hurricane, which is immoral and illegal,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “My office will not abide price gouging, and I’m pleased that everyone who was scammed by this company will receive full restitution.” ...


March 05, 2019

Attorney General Josh Stein Leads Coalition Urging Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls

(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today led a coalition of 54 attorneys general urging the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. Attorney General Stein, Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald, and Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood are leading this coalition of all 50 states, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey.

“My office received more than 1,600 consumer complaints about unwanted robocalls last year,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “These calls aren’t just a nuisance – scammers use them to defraud people out of money. The TRACED Act will help us take steps to block these calls, and I will continue my work leading a bipartisan group of attorneys general to find additional technology solutions to this...


NORTH DAKOTA

March 08, 2019

FIFTY-FOUR ATTORNEYS GENERAL URGE CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ROBOCALLS

BISMARCK, ND - Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem joined attorneys general nationwide in urging the US Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. These illegal calls have been the number one consumer complaint reported to Stenehjem’s office in each of the last three years.

The coalition of fifty-four attorneys general sent the letter earlier this week to the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, in support of the TRACED Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey. In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to
take steps to combat these illegal calls.
“Consumers are plagued by these incessant illegal calls, to their landlines and cell phones, and are frustrated that the telemarketers and scam artists appear to ignore federal laws with impunity. The...


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**NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

March 29, 2019

**Price freeze remains in effect for the CNMI**

The Office of the Attorney General would like to remind all retailers in the CNMI that the Declaration of Price Freeze signed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres on October 27, 2018 remains in effect until it is rescinded, or until the declaration of emergency or disaster are terminated, whichever occurs first. Governor Ralph DLG. Torres issued a Renewal of Declaration of Major Disaster and State of Significant Emergency on March 22, 2019, extending the price freeze for the Northern Mariana Islands for an additional thirty days.

While in effect, it is illegal for any person or business to raise the price of items for sale or the cost of housing rentals, to include apartments and condos. A person or business found to be in violation of the Consumer Disaster Price Freeze Act can be prosecuted criminally or civilly, and can face up to a $10,000 fine and up to one year...


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**OKLAHOMA**

March 05, 2019

**Attorney General Hunter Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Hunter, along with 53 other attorneys general, have sent a letter to the heads of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, urging action on federal legislation that would effectively address illegal scam calls.

The bipartisan legislation, titled the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, would require service providers to adopt technology that verifies that incoming calls are legitimate before they reach consumers’ phones and allows the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to fine telemarketers up to $10,000 per prohibited call.

Attorney General Hunter said the legislation also directs federal consumer protection and law enforcement agencies to work alongside state attorneys general to find ways to combat the calls and prosecute individuals or groups making them.

“Atorneys general are uniquely positioned and are on the front line in our states in terms of protecting consumers,” Attorney General Hunter said. “This commonsense legislation will
OREGON

March 19, 2019

Attorney General Rosenblum Opposes Federal Effort to Delay Payday Lending Protections

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and 24 state Attorneys General today urged the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. Although the CFPB, in 2018, imposed a number of common sense underwriting lender requirements to make sure that borrowers could pay back their loan and prevent loan companies from engaging in abusive tactics, the agency recently proposed an additional delay of these new rules. The Attorneys General argue in their comment letter that further delay is unwarranted.

“Payday loans are a loan of last resort, typically incurred by consumers for urgent needs such as to pay rent, buy groceries and pay for everyday necessities. We must do all we can to protect the hardworking families that need these loans in a pinch. The CFPB instituted a thorough review of...


March 08, 2019

Top 10 Consumer Complaints of 2018

In honor of National Consumer Protection week (March 3—9, 2019), Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today released the Oregon Department of Justice’s annual list of Top Ten Consumer Complaints. In 2018, the Attorney General’s Consumer Hotline received 38,000 phone calls, which resulted in more than 7,000 written complaints, running the gamut from telecommunications to medical services and products. For the first time, towing is a new category to make the list.

“Each year our annual top ten list changes, but our general advice stays the same. The best way to stay safe is to just hang up the phone on telephone scammers, and if something seems too good to be true, it probably is! Today’s scammers are quick, sophisticated, and will take your money in a few seconds if they can. Be on the look-out for any suspicious deals, or if something does not seem right. Scammers are everywhere you are—they...

CONSUMER ALERT: Attorney General Shapiro Warns Consumers to be Aware of “We Buy Homes” Scam
HARRISBURG — Attorney General Shapiro is warning Pennsylvanians to be aware of deceptive advertising by businesses posting “We Buy Homes” signs on street corners. The signs are often a scam—looking to take advantage of Pennsylvanians suffering from debt, job loss, or other significant life changes and looking to make some fast money.
Businesses behind the “We Buy Houses” signs typically offer to purchase a consumer’s home for less than actual value, and the “Cash for Homes” scams can take two different forms. One targets those who are trying to avoid foreclosure. The buyer may promise relief from foreclosure, but will then take the deed without paying off the mortgage balance, leaving the home-seller ultimately responsible for the monthly payments and subject to foreclosure.
Another scam is when the buyer lures sellers in with promises to take the house “as is,” allowing the seller to avoid having to make repairs. However, the buyer will...


Attorney General Josh Shapiro Provides Information for Students Following Sudden Closure of Art Institute of Pittsburgh
HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced the availability of information and resources for students affected by the sudden closure of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and the Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online Division.
On March 8, 2019, the two schools, which were owned by Dream Center Education Holdings, LLC, abruptly closed. Due to the sudden nature of this closing, hundreds of Pennsylvania students have been left with numerous questions regarding their transcripts, loans and transferring credits.
“The sudden closure of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh has left hundreds of students across the Commonwealth in limbo about their academic futures, and my Bureau of Consumer Protection is actively looking for answers for them,” said Attorney General Shapiro. “My office is working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help students and their families get answers to their questions and move forward with their academic careers. We will provide updates for...

March 08, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Shapiro Cautions Consumers about New Twist on Social Security Scam**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro is alerting Pennsylvania consumers to a new twist on an old scam involving their Social Security numbers. The scam differs from traditional Social Security scams because callers are telling consumers that their Social Security number has been compromised or suspended, rather than their usual tactic of saying it was stolen or demanding certain action to receive benefits. Some consumers alleged that the scam artists are impersonating government agencies and threatening arrest, saying that they must make an immediate payment in order to avoid jail time.

“This Consumer Protection Week, my Office is warning consumers that scam artists are out in full force, employing new tactics to achieve their same nefarious goals,” said Attorney General Josh Shapiro. “I urge Pennsylvanians to be vigilant of this scam and, if you believe that you have been victimized, please contact my Office immediately. We are here to protect you, and...”


March 07, 2019

**Attorney General Shapiro Takes on Tech Support Scams**

HARRISBURG — Acknowledging National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced his office participated in a nationwide effort to combat tech support scammers, who try to trick consumers—particularly senior citizens—into buying costly tech support and repair services. The initiative was a nationwide crackdown by 20 bipartisan attorneys general, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC.) to take down scammers.

Here is how a tech support scam works: Scammers use phone calls and online ads resembling security alerts from major technology companies to trick consumers into contacting the operators of these schemes and providing access to the consumers’ computers. The scammers will claim consumers’ computers are infected with viruses or experiencing other problems. They then pressure consumers into buying unnecessary computer repair services, service plans, anti-virus protection or software, and other products and services.

“This Consumer Protection Week, I...”


March 05, 2019

**Attorney General Josh Shapiro Raises Awareness During Consumer Protection Week**

HARRISBURG — In acknowledgement of National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General
Josh Shapiro is increasing awareness of resources available to the consumers of Pennsylvania from the Office of Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection.

“Protecting Pennsylvania consumers from being victimized by scam artists is a top priority of my Office,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “Whether that scam originates on the street corner or in a corporate board room, our staff will investigate and take action to defend affected consumers. Last year, we saved Pennsylvanians more than $8 million—and we’re committed to fighting for them, securing restitution and protecting their hard-earned dollars.”

In 2018, the Office of Attorney General saved consumers over $8 million—a 156 percent increase over 2017—through remittance, mediation and loan forgiveness. The Bureau of Consumer Protection received 24,767 consumer complaints in 2018, and already 4,822 in 2019. Mediation savings in 2018 jumped 17 percent, with the average Pennsylvania consumer saving...


RHODE ISLAND

March 28, 2019

Treasurer Magaziner, Attorney General Neronha Join Legislators to Introduce Student Loan Bill of Rights Legislation

PROVIDENCE, RI - - Rhode Island Treasurer Seth Magaziner and Attorney General Peter Neronha today joined Senator Dawn Euer (D- Dist. 13, Jamestown, Newport) and Representative Joseph McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston), along with Brenda Dann-Messier, Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, and Liz Tanner, Director of the Department of Business Regulation, to introduce legislation that will help protect Rhode Islanders from deceptive student loan practices by introducing new consumer protections for student loan borrowers and establishing oversight of student loan servicers operating in the State.

"Too many Rhode Islanders are vulnerable to deceptive and predatory practices by their student loan servicers, who make it hard for borrowers to keep their loan payments affordable," said Treasurer Magaziner. "Too often, borrowers aren't receiving accurate information about their loan which can result in higher interest, leave them in debt longer, and make them more likely to default. This legislation will hold student loan servicers accountable...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35539

March 07, 2019

Attorney General's Office Imposter Scam Calls

We have received reports of consumers getting unsolicited phone calls from manipulated phone numbers that identify as The Office of the Attorney General on the caller-id display. Upon answering the phone, either a recording or a person posing to be the "Attorney General
of the state" will be on the line. Be assured, this is not the RI AG's office calling. If you get one of these phone calls, you should hang up the phone. Do not press anything or speak to anyone who is trying to obtain personal information.

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35395

March 06, 2019
RI Attorney General warns consumers of 'speculative' ticket scams
It's Consumer Protection Week and Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha is warning Rhode Islanders to be careful of potential ticket resale scams that are becoming increasingly common.
The unlawful conduct at issue is the sale of undisclosed "speculative tickets," which are offers to sell tickets that the ticket seller does not have, has not purchased, and does not have a contractual right to obtain. It is only after a consumer places a ticket order that the seller attempts to purchase actual tickets, at a lower price and from a different source, to provide to the buyer.
Speculative tickets are associated with excessive price mark-ups and consumers ending up with different seats than those they believed they purchased or, worse yet, not obtaining a ticket to the show or event at all. In addition, the practice of listing an undisclosed speculative ticket may be a violation of Rhode Island's Deceptive Trade...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35385

March 04, 2019
AG Neronha announces National Consumer Protection Week
Looking to protect yourself from fraud, identity theft, and scams? Maybe you're wondering about the best way to use credit, how to shop for a used car, or maximize your security online. The Consumer Protection Unit at the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office has information for you during National Consumer Protection Week — March 3-9, 2019 — and any time throughout the year.
"One of the top priorities of this office is to protect hard working Rhode Islanders and our most vulnerable residents from predatory interests," said Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha. "With the rising threat of identity theft, it is more important than ever that we hold accountable those that mishandle sensitive information and violate the privacy of Rhode Islanders."...

➢ Original Press Release: https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35368
Attorney General Wilson raises awareness of tech support scams

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – Attorney General Alan Wilson, in coordination with attorneys general from across the country through the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), has joined the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other regulators in raising awareness of tech support scams. As part of this effort, NAAG and the Department of Justice today announced a sweep of elder fraud cases and focused particular attention on tech support scams as a major threat to senior citizens.

These scams work in similar ways. Scammers use phone calls and online ads resembling security alerts from major technology companies to trick consumers into contacting the operators of these schemes and providing access to the consumers’ computers. The scammers will claim consumers’ computers are infected with viruses or experiencing other problems. They then try to pressure consumers into buying unnecessary computer repair services, service plans, anti-virus protection or software, and other...


Attorney General Alan Wilson urges Congress to take action against robocalls

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – March 5, 2019 – Attorney General Alan Wilson today urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The 54 attorneys general include the attorneys general from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 3 territories. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey.

“We all get robocalls and spoofed calls, where a scammer or telemarketer makes his phone number look like another number so you’ll answer,” Attorney General Wilson said. “It’s a case of the bad guys using technology against us, so we’re urging Congress to do something to protect everyone.”

In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators,...
ATTORNEY GENERAL RAVNSBORG ADVISES TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR DISASTER-RELATED CHARITY SCAMS
PIERRE, S.D. – With the recent weather damage and flooding occurring in neighboring states, Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg reminds South Dakotans to use care and caution in donating to relief efforts and to avoid charity scams.
“As South Dakotans we are proud to stand up and aid our neighbors in times of crisis,” said Ravnsborg. “Unfortunately not everyone sees this as a time to help, instead they see a chance to profit and it is my duty to help South Dakotans recognize and avoid these fundraising scams aimed at playing off our natural empathy.”
Following a few simple steps can help ensure that your donations reach those in need ...


March 05, 2019
Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls
“I am proud to join Attorneys General from across the nation to support this step to put a stop to the unwanted robocalls and robotexts our citizens endure on a regular basis.”
In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation...


TENNESSEE
March 26, 2019
AG Slattery Responds to Oklahoma Settlement with Purdue Pharma
Nashville- The settlement announcement today between the state of Oklahoma and Purdue Pharma is a favorable development. After years of denial, Purdue finally recognized its role in creating the opioid crisis.
The opioid epidemic is nationwide and deserves far reaching relief. That is why Tennessee, as a leader of a bipartisan coalition of more than 40 states, is actively pursuing a comprehensive resolution involving opioid manufacturers and distributors that would resolve claims by the states and their subdivisions. Critical discussions have been underway in the last few months.
At the same time, a recent Knox County circuit court ruling against Purdue will advance the
litigation against the company for violating the state’s Consumer Protection Act. The owners of Purdue, the Sackler family, are also under investigation by this office as well as other opioid manufacturers and distributors.


March 05, 2019

AG Slatery Urges Congress to Take Action against Robocalls
In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls and creates an interagency working group to take additional actions to reduce robocalls and...


March 04, 2019

AG Slatery Announces Tennesseans Can Access Wells Fargo Redress Program
Nashville – Attorney General Herbert H. Slattery III said Tennesseans who have not yet been made whole through other Wells Fargo settlement remediation programs can now register a complaint with Wells Fargo for possible relief.
Wells Fargo’s redress review program (https://www.wellsfargo.com/commitment/redress/) was a key component of the December 2018 settlement with the attorneys general of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The settlement resolves claims the bank violated state consumer protection laws by opening millions of unauthorized accounts and enrolling customers into online banking services without their knowledge or consent, improperly referring customers for enrollment in third-party renters and life insurance policies, improperly charging auto loan customers for force-placed and unnecessary collateral protection insurance, failing to ensure customers received refunds of unearned premiums on certain optional auto finance products, and incorrectly charging customers for mortgage rate lock extension fees.
As part of the program, Wells Fargo will maintain a website...

TEXAS

March 01, 2019

Consumer Alert: Scammers Impersonating Pastors to Solicit Gift Cards

Attorney General Ken Paxton today issued a consumer alert regarding persons alleging to be priests or pastors texting members of the church and asking them to buy gift cards for a false charitable cause. Texans have received deceptive texts from people pretending to be pastors, then requesting that they purchase a gift card and send them the information to access that card. The scammers claim these gift cards are needed for some charitable reason, but insist they cannot pick up a gift card themselves and the purchaser will be reimbursed. “All Texans should be aware of unsolicited calls and texts from scammers impersonating leaders in their Church. This is a dirty trick criminals are using to make a quick buck at the expense of people of faith,” Attorney General Paxton said. “My office stands ready to assist all hard-working Texans who are harmed by these schemes. The consumer protection section of our...


March 01, 2019

AG Paxton Announces Temporary Restraining Order in Tech Support Scam Case

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that the Travis County District Court granted a temporary restraining order halting the deceptive practices of Latitude Solutions & Consulting LLC and We Brand Better, LLC, as well as the two individuals who own and operate the companies. Attorney General Paxton’s lawsuit also secured an order freezing all of the defendants’ assets so that such assets can be preserved and used to compensate victims following a final trial in the matter. The lawsuit, filed by Attorney General Paxton’s Consumer Protection Division, alleges that Texas resident Harneet Oberoi and Sahil Miglani used deception and scare tactics to trick consumers into paying hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars for unnecessary and worthless computer repairs. The defendants’ tech scam generated more than $11 million in revenue, most of which was wired to bank accounts in India. “I’m pleased that my office’s lawsuit shut down the operators of a major nationwide...


UTAH

March 20, 2019
An Update from the Utah Opioid Task Force

Yesterday, the Utah Opioid Task Force held a meeting to discuss the opioid crisis in Utah and share resources to aid in the battle against addiction and overdose.

The Effect of Opioids on Consumers & Children

Mark Jansen from the University of Utah David Eccles School of Business presented to the Utah Opioid Task Force on the indirect effects opioid abuse has on consumer behavior and finances. Some of the principal unseen effects of the opioid crisis are higher default rates and a raised cost of credit for consumers.

Children are also highly impacted by opioids, addictions, and overdoses. Carrie Jensen from the CJC program and Allison Smith on behalf of Utah Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, presented on the high-risk children are at when their parents are suffering from an addiction to opioids. Every 15 minutes in the U.S., a child is born addicted to opioids. Additionally, not only do children do...


March 07, 2019

Utah AG Offers 5 Tips to Protect Yourself from Fraud

SALT LAKE CITY – In observance of National Consumer Protection Week, Utah Attorney General Sean D. Reyes reminded Utah citizens to defend themselves from fraud by observing the following five tips:

1. Guard Your Personal Information

Scammers often pretend to be someone reputable such as a business, government entity, or a charity. They may claim they need to verify your personal information, or you owe them money. Whether it’s over the phone, email, social media, or in person, don’t give out your personal information. This includes banking and financial information, your birthdate, and social security number.

2. Don’t Believe Everything You See

Technology makes it easy for scammers to alter what is displayed on your caller ID, so the information isn’t always correct. If someone contacts you asking for money or your personal information, you can always hang up and call the business or entity back at a number that you can...

➤ Original Press Release: https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/5-tips-to-protect-yourself-from-fraud/

VERMONT

March 14, 2019

Attorney General Warns Vermonters to Beware of Tech Support Scam

Attorney General T.J. Donovan is alerting Vermonters about a tech support scam as part of a nationwide crackdown on fraudsters who try to trick consumers into buying fake tech support...
and repair services. The tech support scam is the third most common scam reported to the AG’s Consumer Assistance Program (CAP). The scam uses fake pop-up ads purporting to be Microsoft, or another legitimate company, to lure consumers to send money for virus protection or other tech support. This scam may also be done by phone.

Mary Kerr of Ferrisburgh was recently tricked by this scheme. “I was worried something was really wrong with my computer,” she said. “But, in the end I realized these people were fraudsters. They tried to take my money and there was nothing really wrong with my computer,” she said. “In fact, I had to take action to stop them from accessing my computer after that,”...

➢ Original Press Release: https://ago.vermont.gov/blog/2019/03/14/attorney-general-warns-vermonters-to-beware-of-tech-support-scam/

March 12, 2019

**Attorney General Reminds VermonTERS to File VW Claims by March 14**

Attorney General T.J. Donovan is reminding eligible VermonTERS that claims for the Volkswagen settlement monies must be postmarked no later than March 14, 2019.

In May 2018 the Vermont Attorney General’s Office reached a settlement with Volkswagen to resolve violations of the Vermont Consumer Protection Act involving VW’s well-publicized diesel engine scandal. Under the settlement, VW agreed to pay Vermont consumers $2.9 million, up to $1,000 for every qualifying vehicle.

“Thousands of VermonTERS have already filed their claims,” said Donovan. “But, we want to make sure that every qualified VermonTER has an opportunity to receive part of the settlement. The deadline for making a claim is March 14th, so don’t wait,” he said.

Consumers should contact the Claims Administrator toll-free at 1-866-665-8420 if they believe they are eligible and have not received a claims form, or with questions about filing a claim postmarked by March 14th.


March 06, 2019

**Attorney General Donovan Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls**

Attorney General T.J. Donovan urged the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing. A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The TRACED Act would require companies to take advantage of a system for call identification to curb illegal robocalls.

“Robocalls can be annoying, but when there is a scammer on the other end of the phone, they can be disastrous,” said Attorney General Donovan. “I call on Congress to do what they can to protect people from illegal robocalls.”
In their letter, the attorneys general state that the TRACED Act enables states, federal regulators, and telecom providers to take steps to combat these illegal calls. The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help...


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VIRGINIA

March 19, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING OPPOSES CFPB EFFORT TO DELAY PROTECTIONS FROM PAYDAY LENDERS

RICHMOND (March 19, 2019) – As part of his ongoing efforts to protect Virginians from predatory lending, Attorney General Mark R. Herring today urged the CFPB to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. In 2017, approximately 96,000 Virginians took out more than 309,000 payday loans totaling nearly $123 million with an average APR of 254%. More than 122,000 Virginians took out approximately $155 million in car title loans in 2017, and nearly 12,000 Virginians had their cars repossessed and sold for inability to repay a car title loan. Attorney General Herring is part of a coalition of 25 states who sent a letter to the CFPB.

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March 07, 2019

*SCAM ALERT*

HERRING WARNS VIRGINIANS ABOUT TECH SUPPORT AND REPAIR SERVICES SCAMS

RICHMOND (March 7, 2019) – Attorney General Mark R. Herring is warning Virginians about scammers who try to trick consumers into buying costly tech support and repair services as part of a nationwide crackdown on these scams. Attorney General Herring, in coordination with attorneys general from across the country through the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), has joined the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other regulators to combat tech support scams. As part of this effort, NAAG and the Department of Justice today announced a sweep of elder fraud cases and focused particular attention on tech support scams as a major threat to senior citizens.

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March 07, 2019
HERRING WARNS VIRGINIANS ABOUT DANGERS OF PREDATORY LOANS

RICHMOND (March 7, 2019)—During National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Mark R. Herring is encouraging Virginians to familiarize themselves with the risks associated with small-dollar loans including online, payday, car title, and open-end loans, and to understand their rights when taking out one of these potentially risky loans. In 2017, approximately 96,000 Virginians took out more than 309,000 payday loans totaling nearly $123 million with an average APR of 254%. More than 122,000 Virginians took out approximately $155 million in car title loans in 2017, and nearly 12,000 Virginians had their cars repossessed and sold for inability to repay a car title loan.

“These small-dollar loans can act as financial quicksand, trapping Virginians in a vicious cycle of debt and high interest rates that will cost them hundreds if not thousands of dollars. Predatory lenders are exploitative and wrong but unfortunately too many Virginians find themselves turning to them...


March 06, 2019

HERRING HIGHLIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR VIRGINIA STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS

RICHMOND (March 6, 2019) – As part of National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Mark R. Herring is highlighting protections and resources for student borrowers, as well as the work he and his team have done to protect Virginia student loan borrowers. Attorney General Herring and his team have reached multiple settlements with for-profit colleges for using deceitful tactics against student borrowers, as well as continuously challenged Secretary Betsy DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education in court to uphold the federal protections in place to protect student borrowers from predatory, for-profit schools. The Consumer Protection Section has recovered more than $10.3 million for more than 5,000 student borrowers in Virginia. ...


March 06, 2019

HERRING HIGHLIGHTS CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

RICHMOND (March 6, 2019) – As part of National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Mark R. Herring is encouraging Virginia veterans and military families to familiarize themselves with the special consumer protections in state and federal law that may protect them and their families from fraud, scams, predatory lending and abusive business practices. Veterans and military families are often targeted by scammers and unscrupulous businesses because they have a consistent income and can often be called away from home for long periods of time. Attorney General Herring has made the needs of veterans and military families a priority for his
re-organized and expanded Consumer Protection Section. ...


March 05, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING URGES CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ROBOCALLS
RICHMOND (March 5, 2019)—Attorney General Mark R. Herring today urged the U.S. Senate to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing by enacting the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act. Attorney General Herring and a coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The legislation has bipartisan support and is sponsored by Senators John Thune and Ed Markey. ...


March 04, 2019
ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING ANNOUNCES START OF WELLS FARGO CONSUMER REDRESS REVIEW PROGRAM
RICHMOND (March 4, 2019) -Under the terms of a settlement between Wells Fargo and a multistate coalition including Attorney General Mark R. Herring, Wells Fargo has begun a consumer redress review program to make whole those customers who were harmed by Wells Fargo's unauthorized account scandal and who have not received a full reimbursement through other programs. The new program will allow consumers to have their case individually reviewed by a Wells Fargo escalation team to see if they may be eligible to receive any other compensation. Virginia secured changes in Wells Fargo's business practices and $11.5 million in compensation as part of a $575 million multistate settlement in December to resolve claims that the bank violated state consumer protection laws. ...


March 04, 2019
HERRING HIGHLIGHTS CONSUMER PROTECTION RESOURCES AS NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK BEGINS
RICHMOND(March 4, 2019)-As National Consumer Protection Week gets underway, Attorney General Mark R. Herring is highlighting the resources available through his Consumer Protection Section to protect Virginians from being exploited by abusive, deceptive, predatory, or illegal business practices. Since 2014, Attorney General Herring's Consumer Protection Section has recovered more than $292 million in relief for consumers and payments from violators. The Section has also transferred more than $33 million to the Commonwealth's
General Fund. Following a major reorganization and enhancement in 2016, the OAG's Consumer Protection Section has been even more effective in fighting for the rights of Virginians. ...


March 03, 2019
HERRING ENCOURAGES VIRGINIANS TO KNOW THEIR RIGHTS DURING NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK
RICHMOND (March 3, 2019) - From March 3-9, Attorney General Mark R. Herring and his Consumer Protection Section will use National Consumer Protection Week to help Virginians understand their rights as consumers, and to help Virginia businesses understand their responsibilities to their customers. Each day will highlight a common consumer protection challenge and ways that Virginians can protect themselves and their hard-earned money ...


WASHINGTON
March 28, 2019
Joint statement on Affordable Care Act victory from AG Ferguson and Insurance Commissioner Kreidler
OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson and Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler offered the following joint statement:
“Washington state secured its 18th legal victory against the Trump Administration this afternoon. Today’s ruling by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia protects the Affordable Care Act by blocking the Trump Administration’s attempt to undermine state health care exchanges. President Trump’s Rule jeopardized state health care exchanges around the country, including Washington’s. The federal judge hearing our case correctly called out the ‘absurdity’ of the Administration’s reasoning, and ruled the Administration was unlawfully attempting an ‘end run’ around the ACA. Washington will continue to fight to protect hardworking Washingtonians’ access to affordable health care, and hold the Trump Administration accountable to the rule of law.” ...

March 27, 2019

**AG Ferguson legislation to raise tobacco sale age to 21 passes Legislature**

OLYMPIA — Today, with a bipartisan vote of 33-12 in the Washington State Senate, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation to raise the sale age for tobacco and vapor products to 21.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson and the Washington State Department of Health jointly requested the legislation, which Rep. Paul Harris, R-Vancouver, sponsored. Sen. Patty Kuderer, D-Bellevue, sponsored the companion Senate bill and helped move the bill to the floor for a vote. The House of Representatives passed the bill with a bipartisan vote of 66-30 on Feb. 20. Gov. Jay Inslee, who has long supported the legislation, has promised to sign the bill. The bill goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2020. ...


March 12, 2019

**Ferguson: Distributors ignored red flags while pouring staggering amounts of opioids into Washington**

SEATTLE — Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a lawsuit today against the three largest distributors of prescription opioids in Washington state, arguing that they failed to alert law enforcement of suspicious opioid orders, and illegally shipped those orders into Washington for years, and contributed to the illegal supply of opioids, fueling the state’s opioid epidemic.

Ferguson’s lawsuit, filed today in King County Superior Court, asserts that McKesson Corp., Cardinal Health Inc. and AmerisourceBergen Drug Corp. made billions of dollars feeding the opioid epidemic, shipping huge amounts of oxycodone, fentanyl, hydrocodone and other prescription opioids into the state even when they knew or should have known those drugs were likely to end up in the hands of drug dealers and addicts.

Requirements for opioid distributors infographic

Opioid distributors are legally required to monitor the size and frequency of prescription opioid orders to identify suspicious orders that could be diverted into the illegal drug market....


March 07, 2019

**AG Ferguson, Gov. Inslee to firearms dealers: Don’t be fooled by I-1639 opposition**

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson and Governor Jay Inslee sent a letter to 262 firearms dealers in counties where sheriffs have indicated they will not enforce Initiative 1639, warning that, regardless of local officials’ opposition to Initiative 1639, firearms dealers are still required to follow state law.

As a condition of their federal licenses, firearms dealers are required to comply with state and federal law. Unless a court rules otherwise, laws and initiatives are presumed to be...
constitutional. No court has struck down any provision of I-1639.

“Local officials’ personal opposition to I-1639 may have created confusion regarding firearms dealers’ legal responsibilities,” Ferguson said. “We wrote this letter to ensure these dealers have accurate information about the initiative to avoid legal jeopardy because of statements made by local elected officials.”

“Despite what some of these sheriffs would have people believe, no one has the ability to pick and choose which laws to...


March 04, 2019

AG Ferguson answers frequently asked questions on Initiative 1639, sends letters to all 39 sheriffs

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today released a “Frequently Asked Questions” document on Initiative 1639, directing the document to sheriffs across the state and releasing it to the general public online. The FAQ is available here.

In his letter to sheriffs, Ferguson writes: “Recent public statements from your colleagues regarding the refusal to enforce Initiative 1639, approved by nearly 60% of Washington voters last November, suggest widespread misunderstanding regarding the requirements and status of the new law.”

Ferguson’s letter makes several key points, including:

- Individuals age 18 to 21 who own or possess a semiautomatic rifle prior to July 1 do not face criminal liability for owning those weapons. The initiative does say those individuals may only carry those weapons: At their businesses, homes, or property; while engaging in lawful outdoor recreation activities, such as hunting; or while target shooting at an authorized range. ...


March 04, 2019

Attorney General Ferguson’s bill to ban manufacture of “ghost guns” passes House

OLYMPIA — With bipartisan support, the Washington House of Representatives today passed Attorney General Bob Ferguson’s legislation prohibiting the manufacture of untraceable, undetectable 3D-printed guns. The measure, sponsored by Rep. Javier Valdez, D-Seattle, passed the House by a bipartisan 57-39 vote. It now heads to the state Senate for consideration.

“I support the Second Amendment. With that said, we cannot allow felons and other dangerous individuals to make an end-run around our state’s background check requirements by printing untraceable, undetectable 3D-printed guns,” Ferguson said. “Guns that can evade metal
detectors pose too great a risk to the safety of our communities.”

Sen. Manka Dhingra, D-Redmond, sponsored a companion bill in the Senate. Several organizations offered key support for the measure, including the Alliance for Gun Responsibility. Other supporters included: Gov. Jay Inslee; Everytown for Gun Safety; Grandmothers Against Gun Violence; Faith Action Network; Foundation for Healthy Generations; the Washington State Medical Association and the...


WEST VIRGINIA

March 29, 2019

Attorney General Morrisey Announces Money Smart Week 2019 Events

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced scheduled events across West Virginia to celebrate Money Smart Week 2019. The events are designed to remind consumers about financial literacy and educate them on ways to protect personal information.

Money Smart Week 2019 takes place from March 30 through April 6.

“Money Smart Week allows our office to provide information that helps consumers better manage their personal finances,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Our office representatives will be available to pass on knowledge to consumers about scams, identifying elder financial abuse and protecting information from identity thieves. Our main goal is to connect with West Virginians and offer them necessary tools to make wise financial decisions.” ...

- Original Press Release: https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?e=5699e8e411&u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=cf2d36f351

March 14, 2019

Attorney General Morrisey Releases Top Consumer Complaints in Southern W.Va. for 2018

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey released a list of the top consumer complaints received by the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division for Boone, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo and Wyoming counties in 2018.

“Our Consumer Protection Division works diligently to protect consumers from dishonest business practices,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “I encourage consumers who believe they have been a victim of an unlawful practice to reach out to our office and file a complaint.”

The list is assembled from written consumer complaints filed with the Consumer Protection Division. The tally does not include phone calls from consumers who did not follow up with a written complaint. It also does not include reports of scams.

The 2018 top complaint categories for southern West Virginia were ...

March 05, 2019

**Attorney General Morrisey Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls**

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey urged the U.S. Senate on Tuesday to enact legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing.

A bipartisan coalition of 54 state and territory attorneys general sent a letter to the U.S. Senate in support of the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act.

Their letter contends that the legislation would enable states, federal regulators and telecom providers to take steps to combat illegal robocalls.

“Our office constantly receives calls from consumers complaining about scams, robocalls and call spoofing,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Our office is doing what we can within its constitutional power, but we need Congress to step up and help us stop these irritating calls.”

The legislation will require voice service providers to participate in a call authentication framework to help block unwanted calls and creates an interagency working group to take additional actions to reduce robocalls and...


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March 01, 2019

**Attorney General Morrisey Announces First Events For National Consumer Protection Week 2019**

CHARLESTON — Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced his office will host various events to jumpstart National Consumer Protection Week, all aimed at consumer education and fighting fraud.

The Attorney General collaborates with the Federal Trade Commission and federal, state and local agencies, consumer groups and national organizations to raise awareness about consumer fraud issues from Sunday, March 3, to Saturday, March 9.

“National Consumer Protection Week highlights consumer protection issues that our office deals with all year, every year,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Scammers are always ready to take advantage of consumers to steal money.”

Events take place across the Mountain State beginning Sunday and Monday at the following locations. ...


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**WISCONSIN**

March 19, 2019
AG Kaul Opposes CFPB Effort to Delay Protections from Payday Lenders

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today urged the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to take immediate action to protect consumers from abuses in payday lending, vehicle title lending, and other types of high-cost exploitative consumer lending. Attorney General Kaul is part of a coalition of 25 states, led by North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, taking today’s action.

“We should have strong protections in place for borrowers,” said Attorney General Kaul. “Delaying the date by which lenders must comply with rules that protect consumers is unwarranted and would mean that more consumers will be harmed by abusive lending practices.”

In 2017, CFPB announced a new rule that would help protect borrowers and ensure they would have the ability to repay loans while also prohibiting lenders from using abusive tactics when seeking repayment. The rule went into effect in early 2018, but compliance was delayed to August 19, 2019,...


March 06, 2019

AG Kaul Urges Congress to Take Action Against Robocalls

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is urging the U.S. Senate to enact the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, legislation to curb illegal robocalls and spoofing.

“Wisconsinites receive far too many robocalls and unwanted telemarketing calls. The TRACED Act is a step in the right direction, and I hope Congress passes it soon,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul.

A coalition of 54 attorneys general sent a letter to the U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the TRACED Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sens. John Thune and Ed Markey.

“Telemarketing complaints have nearly doubled in Wisconsin since 2015, and the vast majority of these are illegal robocalls,” said Brad Pfaff, Secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). “As the state’s regulatory authority on telemarketing issues, DATCP applauds any action that gives consumers and government agencies...

Civil Lawsuit

KENTUCKY

March 28, 2019

**Beshear Wins First Major Fight to Protect Health Care for Kentucky Families**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 28, 2019) – Today, Attorney General Andy Beshear and 11 other attorneys general announced they won a federal lawsuit that will protect essential health care benefits for Kentuckians on individual and small group health insurance plans.

Beshear said the lawsuit sought to invalidate a change in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Association Health Plan Rule that would have allowed individual and small group health plans not to comply with the provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“We are in multiple fights to save health care protections and today’s major first victory prevents thousands of Kentuckians from being charged more for their health insurance just because they have a pre-existing condition, or because of their age or gender,” said Beshear.

“Now many more Kentucky families won’t have to worry about having their health care taken away.”

At stake in the case is the continuation of more than 10 key health care...