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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Refunds Going to Victims of Bogus Debt Relief Operation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Federal Trade Commission announced more than $16 million is now being distributed to victims of a debt relief scam. The scam targeted thousands of consumers facing financial difficulty in Florida and across the nation. The millions in restitution culminates from a joint lawsuit brought by Attorney General Moody's Consumer Protection Division and the FTC against a group of defendants known as Helping America Group for allegedly convincing victims to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars a month by falsely promising to pay, settle or obtain dismissal of debts and improve payors' credit scores. Instead, victims discovered debts unpaid, accounts in default and credit scores severely damaged—some were sued by creditors, and others were forced into bankruptcy.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It infuriates me that anyone would take advantage of people trying to pay off their debts and improve their financial situations. Thankfully, our office, working together with the FTC, has now recovered millions to be returned to the victims of this appalling scam."

More than 27,000 refund checks will be sent to victims of the scam. Additional money is expected to be collected in this case, and a second round of checks will be planned once additional money is secured.

Recipients should deposit or cash their checks within 90 days. The FTC never requires people to pay money or provide account information to cash a refund check. If recipients have questions about the refunds, they should contact the FTC's refund administrator, JND Legal Administration, at 1(833) 928-2567. Refund data can also be viewed on the FTC's interactive dashboards for refund data.

Consumers suspicious of a scam or deceptive behavior can report it to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com.