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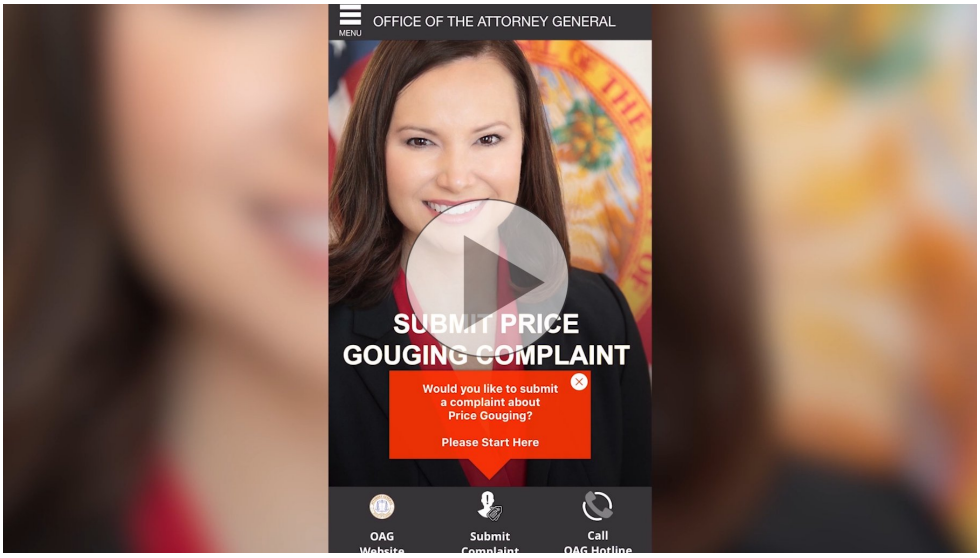
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

More Than $700,000 Recovered Amid Pandemic



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today announced more than $700,000 in recoveries for consumers contacting the Florida Attorney General's Office regarding COVID-19 related purchases and scams. Florida remains under a state of emergency due to the spread of the novel coronavirus. Governor Ron DeSantis issued the emergency declaration in March. Following the declaration, Attorney General Moody activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline for consumers to file complaints related to essential commodities needed to prevent contracting the virus.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "As Florida's Attorney General, I will always do whatever it takes to help consumers that have been taken advantage of—especially in times of crisis. That is why even before the emergency declaration went into effect, we were working with businesses and consumers to secure refunds, remove online posts offering items for outrageous prices and stop deceptive business practices. I am pleased with the results we are getting for consumers, but rest assured, our work is far from over and we continue to wake up early every day and focus on building a stronger, safer Florida."

In addition to securing $703,043 for consumers since activating Florida's Price Gouging Hotline, the Florida Attorney General's Office:

- Received approximately 4,800 consumer contacts about the price of essential commodities;

- Made more than 7,800 referrals and contacts to merchants about allegations of price gouging, refunds and scams;
- Issued 82 subpoenas to further price gouging investigations; and
- Worked with online platforms to deactivate 224 posts offering items for outrageous prices.

Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation and up to a total of $25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period. For more information on price gouging, please click here.

For a list of the commodities covered under the state's price gouging laws during the COVID-19 state of emergency, click here.

Price gouging can be reported by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM, visiting MyFloridaLegal.com or downloading the NO SCAM smartphone app. The app is also available in Spanish.

For tips on reporting price gouging, click here.

Since the COVID-19 emergency declaration, Attorney General Moody has issued more than a dozen Consumer Alerts with information about emerging scams and tips to avoid fraud. To view the latest alerts and to stay up-to-date on COVID-19 related scams, visit the Attorney General's Consumer Alert webpage by clicking here.

For all the Attorney General's COVID-19 related releases and additional COVID-19 tips and resources, click here.