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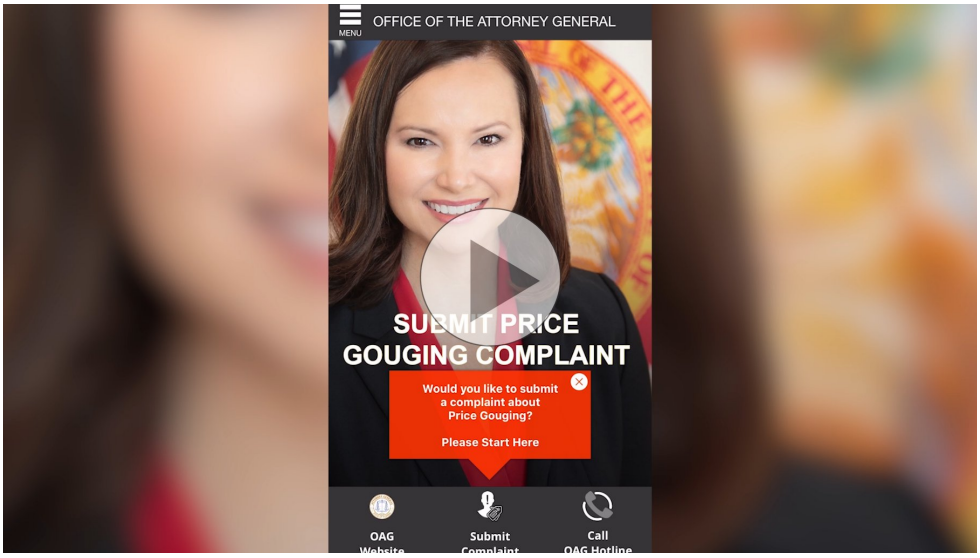
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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Consumers Use NO SCAM to Report COVID-19 Price Gouging



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today highlighted the NO SCAM reporting app for its role in helping consumers report COVID-19 related price gouging. Attorney General Moody launched the price gouging reporting app last year to assist Floridians in reporting outrageous price increases on hurricane-related commodities. As COVID-19 cases began to emerge in the United States, Attorney General Moody quickly adapted the app to intake reports of excessive price increases on essential commodities covered under the Governor's emergency declaration.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Consumers are our eyes and ears in the marketplace helping us spot and deter price gouging. That is why we developed a reporting app and adapted it to intake evidence of COVID-19 related price increases. The app allows users to quickly and conveniently report outrageously priced items and upload pictures of price labels, screenshots, receipts and any other supporting documentation they come across while trying to purchase commodities to protect their health. The information they provide helps our investigators advance price gouging investigations, secure refunds and deter the selling of essential commodities for exorbitant prices."

Since the Governor's state of emergency declaration activating Florida's price gouging laws, hundreds of contacts about potential price gouging have been reported through the NO SCAM app. The app has been downloaded more than 17,000 times since its launch. The app is available for free through the Apple and Android app stores. It is also available in Spanish.

The app allows users in real-time to:

- Send pictures or screenshots of prices on signs and products;
- Capture and report receipts;
- Write narratives regarding interactions with sellers of a good or commodity;
- Report evidence of prices for identical products by different sellers in the same vicinity; and
- Capture any additional supporting documentation.

For more information about how to use the app to report gouging, click here.

Since activating Florida's Price Gouging Hotline, the Florida Attorney General's Office has:

- Received approximately 4,200 consumer contacts about the price of essential commodities;
- Made more than 5,700 referrals and contacts to merchants about allegations of price gouging, refunds and scams;
- Secured more than $343,000 in refunds related to travel, leisure and product purchases;
- Issued 70 subpoenas to further price gouging investigations; and
- Worked with online platforms to deactivate 187 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 11 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.

Last month, Attorney General Moody announced legal action to stop deceptive marketing exploiting COVID-19 stimulus payments. Attorney General Moody's Consumer Protection Division also launched an investigation into Norwegian Cruise Lines and is taking action against third-party sellers using Amazon to allegedly gouge consumers.

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