Jan 8, 2020

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody's First Year Accomplishments



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Today marks one year since Attorney General Ashley Moody took the oath of office and already the 38th Attorney General of Florida has secured vital victories for Floridians. During Attorney General Moody's first year, she made major advances in the ongoing effort to combat the opioid crisis, launched an extensive investigation into the teen vaping epidemic, took legal action to protect consumers from fraud, created a program to support law enforcement and much more.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "One year ago today, I stood on the steps of Florida's Historic Capitol, placed my hand on the Bible, and pledged to protect Floridians and defend our laws. It's an oath I take seriously. One I live out daily. I am proud of what we have achieved during my first year in office, but I'm not looking at the past. I remain laser-focused on the future and I am excited about what we will accomplish in 2020 to build a *stronger, safer Florida*."

After taking the oath of office on Jan. 8, 2019, Attorney General Moody quickly went to work to fulfill campaign promises—fighting to end the opioid crisis, combating human trafficking, supporting Florida law enforcement officers and working hard to protect all Floridians.

Some of Attorney General Moody's year-one successes fighting the national opioid crisis include:

- Negotiated a multibillion-dollar agreement-in-principle with a major international drug company over its role in the national opioid crisis;

- Launched a statewide resource for businesses, caregivers, educators, medical professionals, parents, seniors, service members, students, veterans and others to join the fight to end the opioid crisis;
- Actively pursued and achieved the formation of a Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse. The team of experts is already working on statewide recommendations to advance the fight to end the opioid crisis in Florida;
- Fought for legislation granting the state limited access to information from Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Database Program for use in the Attorney General's state opioid litigation; and
- Personally appeared in court and advocated expediency necessary for trial in the state's opioid litigation to hold responsible the nation's largest opioid distributors, manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies.

During the early months of 2019, Attorney General Moody learned that vaping disrupted Florida schools. To protect Florida youth from nicotine addiction, Attorney General Moody:

- Embarked on a statewide fact-gathering mission to meet face-to-face with educators, law enforcement and parents about the dramatic increase in teen vaping;
- Launched an extensive investigation into the marketing and sales practices of e-cigarette products by more than 20 companies selling in Florida;
- Participated in the first-ever DEA Drug Take-Back Day that accepted vaping products and devices for safe disposal;
- Joined a bipartisan group of attorneys general calling on major video streaming companies to eliminate tobacco imagery in all future content; and
- Announced efforts to seek legislative changes during the 2020 session to further protect minors in Florida from vaping products.

Protecting Floridians and fighting fraud remains a top priority for Attorney General Moody. The office works to investigate, litigate, prosecute and stop illegal schemes targeting Floridians through the Consumer Protection Division, Office of Statewide Prosecution and Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. To strengthen efforts to protect Floridians, Attorney General Moody:

- Created a Consumer Alert program to educate consumers about emerging scams and steps to take to avoid falling prey to fraud, identity theft or other schemes designed to rip-off Floridians;
- Developed a first-of-its-kind phone app, NO SCAM, aimed at streamlining the process to report suspected price gouging during times of emergency;
- Launched, with bipartisan coalitions of attorneys general from across the country, big tech investigations into Facebook and Google;
- Obtained, through the Consumer Protection Division, recoveries valued at more than $153 million from settlements and court-ordered relief—including more than $74 million in monetary or other direct consumer relief;
- Restructured the leadership team within the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit to reenergize MFCU to more proactively fight fraud. MFCU recovered more than $40 million in judgments and settlements last year;

- Assembled a Senior Protection Team focused on fighting fraud targeting older Floridians. SPT has helped recover thousands of dollars for Florida seniors since the team was announced in March; and
- Worked, through the Office of Statewide Prosecution, with local law enforcement to stop millions of dollars in retail theft harming Florida businesses.

Fighting human trafficking and rescuing survivors is another major focus of Attorney General Moody's administration. The Attorney General serves as Chair of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, and the Office of Statewide Prosecution prosecutes complex, multijurisdictional trafficking crimes. Since taking office, Attorney General Moody:

- Hosted, as Chair of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, the 2019 Human Trafficking Summit in Orlando and set an attendance record with more than 850 registered attendees;
- Partnered with Uber ahead of the 2020 Super Bowl in Miami to train drivers to spot and report human trafficking;
- Joined Truckers Against Trafficking and Florida Trucking Association in hosting a half-day training course aimed at educating truckers on identifying human trafficking and how to report it;
- Worked with local law enforcement agencies on multiple cases to rescue trafficking victims and arrest and prosecute human traffickers;
- Ordered a comprehensive review of all Florida policies and task forces related to human trafficking; and
- Assigned a Statewide Prosecutor to each of the local human trafficking task forces in all 20 judicial circuits in Florida.

Attorney General Moody is also committed to supporting law enforcement. In the first few weeks of the new administration, Attorney General Moody created the Back the Blue program to highlight law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

These are just a few examples of the achievements during year one of Attorney General Moody's administration. Attorney General Moody also helped obtain a multistate, multimillion-dollar settlement with Fiat, secured 45-year prison sentences for two of the infamous ninja robbers plus a life sentence for the leader of the crime ring, recovered millions through a national health care fraud scheme sting operation, executed a statewide Medicaid fraud sweep netting 19 individuals on related charges, assisted the DEA in a drug trafficking ring bust and more.

To follow all the latest news from the Florida Attorney General's Office, subscribe to the Week in Review here.

For more general information about the office, visit MyFloridaLegal.com.

To follow Attorney General Moody on Twitter, click here.