Date March 19, 2020

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - March 20, 2020



This week, I issued a Consumer Alert to warn Floridians about scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 1. Screenshot of the malicious website "Corono-Virus-Map[dot]com" pretending to be a legitimate COVID-19 tracker.

Recently, a malicious website displaying a live map of COVID-19 cases mimicking a legitimate map by Johns Hopkins University was reported. Clicking on the website releases malware that can access and steal sensitive user data. It is suspected that this website has spread across the internet through infected email attachments and online advertisements.

As this health epidemic continues, scammers will increasingly target consumers to exploit their concerns about COVID-19 in an attempt to defraud individuals and businesses.

They will use any occasion to prey on the emotions of unsuspecting consumers, and fear is a favorite tool of criminals trying to commit fraud. Please exercise caution when searching the internet for COVID-19 information and do not click on suspicious links or attachments.

Some ways you can avoid COVID-19-related scams include:

- If malware is suspected, do not shop online, access online banking or do other activities that involve sensitive information like usernames, passwords, or account information until it has been checked out;
- If malware or other issues are suspected, seek technical support from a trusted provider;
- Install and update security software regularly; and
- Know that online searches may not be the best way to seek tech support. Tech support scammers may pay to boost rankings in online search results. Instead, seek personal recommendations or consider visiting an electronics store for assistance.

I encourage consumers suspicious of price gouging to report it by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com. Price gouging can also be reported to the Attorney General's Office by downloading the free NO SCAM app in the Android or Apple app store. For tips on reporting price gouging, 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.

Please stay safe, listen to health experts and take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



In The News

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Ashley Moody warns of coronavirus scams, The Capitolist

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Coronavirus: Beware of scammers using online sites and emails, Florida Times-Union

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Don't fall for these COVID-19 scams, WTSP Tampa

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Protecting Floridians

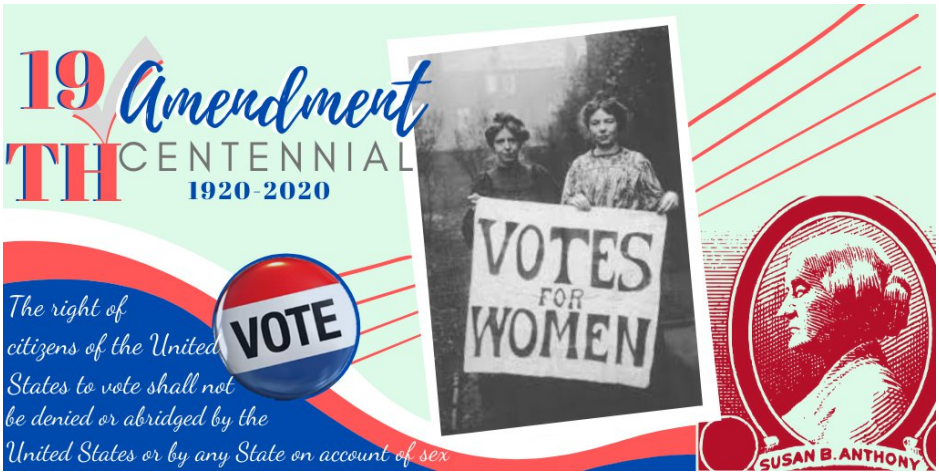


Attorney

General Ashley Moody and Florida's three United States Attorneys are joining forces to warn Floridians about scams related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Florida's top prosecutors at the federal and state levels are committed to preventing, pursuing and prosecuting anyone trying to take advantage of this pandemic for personal profit. Attorney General Moody and the top federal prosecutors are actively collaborating and cooperating in a concerted effort to stop scams relating to the coronavirus.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We will not allow anyone to take advantage of Floridians trying to protect their health and the safety of their families during this global crisis. We are united with Florida's U.S. Attorneys in our commitment to pursue scammers exploiting this pandemic to rip-off our citizens, and we will continue to work diligently to ensure anyone targeting Floridians during this state of emergency is brought to justice." Read More

Attorney General Moody Honors Women's History Month



Attorney General Ashley Moody issued the following statement in recognition of March being Women's History Month:

"Women's History Month is a time to honor all the trailblazing women who came before us. From Susan B. Anthony to the first female Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, I am grateful for the contribution of courageous American women who took risks and forged paths for generations of girls and women to follow." Read More

Attorney General Moody Recognizes National Sunshine Week



In recognition of National Sunshine Week, Attorney General Ashley Moody is asking Floridians to review the 2020 Government-in-the-Sunshine Manual. The manual is available to download for free on Attorney General Moody's website. The manual has assisted citizens, journalists and government agencies for many decades in understanding the requirements and exemptions of Florida's open government laws. The manual is written by the Attorney General's Office and printed through a 42-year partnership with the Florida First Amendment Foundation.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Citizens deserve to know how their government is being run. Sunshine laws were put in place for this purpose, to hold government and elected leaders accountable to citizens. Our state's public meetings and public records laws serve as a shining example of how transparency and accountability can help create a fair, responsive system of government." Read More

Events

Florida remains under a state of emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to Governor Ron DeSantis's emergency declaration, Attorney General Moody activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline. Floridians can report price gouging by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM, visiting MyFloridaLegal.com or using the NO SCAM app.



