Date April 23, 2020

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - April 24, 2020



Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures—like statewide stay-at-home orders and prolonged social distancing. Most Floridians are following the rules and doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19.
I want to encourage Floridians to continue working together to help us stop this pandemic. By doing so, you will not only help protect your neighbors, but also our law enforcement officers and medical professionals on the front lines of this health crisis.

In the past few weeks, far too many heroes in these essential professions have contracted COVID-19—some fatally. My heart goes out to our law enforcement officers and medical professionals risking their health and safety to fight this pandemic.

While most Floridians are social distancing, some are abandoning the advice of health experts—forcing law enforcement into far more face-to-face encounters than necessary.

Sadly, several of these heroes have already succumbed to this highly contagious disease and even more have been exposed and are in quarantine.

Please remember that your actions, no matter how harmless they seem, may have unintended consequences far beyond anything you can imagine.

Listen to our health experts, obey the stay-at-home order and do your part to ease the burden on those who are risking their lives for us every day during one of the worst pandemics in modern times.

Thank you, and stay safe Florida.



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Protecting Floridians



Attorney

General Ashley Moody announced the arrest of a Central Florida attorney for human trafficking a minor and exchanging legal representation for sex with victims as young as 15-years-old. According to an investigation by the Orlando Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation, John Gillespie, 71, operated a prostitution ring out of his residence in Melbourne. Authorities recently arrested Gillespie after he traveled from Brevard County to Orange County to have sex with a 16-year-old for $100 and planned to recruit the victim to come live at his residence.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This behavior from a well-known and experienced attorney is repulsive. Attorneys swear an oath to maintain respect and to abstain from all offensive personality. These alleged actions insult all attorneys who have a passion to protect the defenseless or oppressed.

“His website states ‘Never been a prosecutor, always on the right side of the innocent’—yet, he has been abusing innocent girls and I look forward to him meeting a real and ethical prosecutor from my Office of Statewide Prosecution in court very soon.” Read More



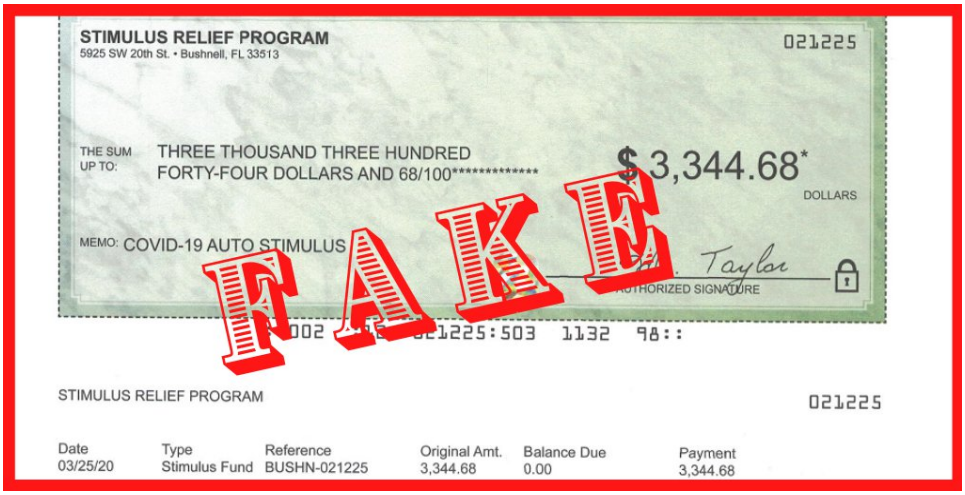
rugs

Attorney

General Ashley Moody is urging Floridians struggling with addiction, loneliness or depression while social distancing to seek help, not drugs. Reports are emerging of an increase in drug overdose calls to first responders in some parts of the state and country during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Many Floridians are fighting two crises—the global COVID-19 pandemic and the national opioid crisis. But just because we are under a statewide stay-at-home order does not mean those struggling with substance abuse disorder must suffer alone. Help is still available, even if some resources are not as conventional as before the pandemic. Virtual counseling and telemedicine are just a few of the newer expanded services permitted under executive orders recently issued to help Floridians stop the spread of COVID-19. Additional resources are available on our website DoseofRealityFL.com.” Read More

Attorney General Moody Takes Legal Action Against Marketing Company for Fake COVID-19 Stimulus Checks in Car Promotions



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Consumer Protection Division filed a legal complaint and motion for temporary injunction against an advertising company, operating in Tampa, for mailing used car promotions disguised as COVID-19 stimulus checks. Traffic Jam Events, LLC and its owner David J. Jeansonne, II allegedly sent the deceptive mailers to more than 35,000 Florida consumers to attract them to an automotive tent sale taking place between March 27 through April 5 in Bushnell, Fla. The mailer also included a simulated check of more than $3,000 appearing to represent funds available from a government stimulus program.

In response to consumer complaints related to the COVID-19 mail piece, the Consumer Protection Division opened an investigation against Traffic Jam Events and Jeansonne, as well as the auto dealer that supplied the automobiles for the tent sale, MK Automotive, Inc. d/b/a New Wave, and its owner, Michael Kastrenakes. The owner of the dealership is cooperating with the investigation and has entered an assurance of voluntary compliance with the Attorney General's Office.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This type of deceptive marketing is completely unacceptable and is even more outrageous during these challenging times. These marketing ploys prey on people's desperate anticipation of stimulus assistance and falsely suggest that there is government stimulus funding for auto purchases. These misleading practices will not be tolerated, and if anyone tries to take advantage of this crisis and the legitimate financial assistance available for those in need, my office will hold you accountable." Read More



s' Rights Week

Attorney

General Ashley Moody announced the recipients of the Attorney General's Distinguished Victim Services Award in recognition of the honored law enforcement officers' and victim advocates' efforts in assisting crime victims. The annual ceremony commemorating National Crime Victims' Rights Week was canceled this year to help stop the spread of COVID-19, but awards will be mailed to this year's winners.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These hardworking and compassionate individuals from across our state have protected and guided victims of crimes through the process, treating each survivor with dignity and respect while helping them cope. They have been there to comfort family members who have lost loved ones to murder, and help seniors recover after becoming a victim of a scam. Florida is a stronger, safer place because of their efforts, and I am honored to be able to recognize these outstanding Floridians for their service and recognize that their work continues even as the state fights to stop the spread of COVID-19. Floridians need to know that help is still available to victims of crime." Read More

Attorney General Moody Seeks Help for Homeowners Affected by COVID-19



In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Attorney General Ashley Moody and a bipartisan coalition of 34 attorneys general sent letters to the Federal Housing Finance Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development recommending certain actions be taken to help homeowners. In the letters, the coalition applauds recent federal efforts to suspend evictions and foreclosures and expresses appreciation for the additional forbearance and foreclosure relief provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The coronavirus-relief legislation, signed by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, provides protections for homeowners whose loans are backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac or other federal entities.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “We appreciate the federal actions thus far, but more must be done to help homeowners who have lost their jobs due to this health crisis. COVID-19 will present unprecedented challenges to homeowners and the mortgage servicing industry. The recommendations from our bipartisan coalition will help millions of American homeowners avoid delinquency while still limiting any potential adverse effect on the mortgage servicing industry.” Read More