

Date December 18, 2020

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - Dec. 18, 2020



As the proud wife of a law enforcement officer, I understand the incredible responsibility and sacrifice it takes for the brave men and women who uphold the oath to protect and serve. In many cases, officers need to think and respond within a moment's notice, putting their lives in harm's way to save others from a grim fate. This week, I presented Pasco County Sheriff's Deputy Noah Yanzer with a Back the Blue Award for his courageous and quick actions rescuing a family from a house fire last month.

On Nov. 7, while beginning an early morning shift, Deputy Yanzer responded to a dispatch call reporting a nearby house fire.

He immediately rushed to the scene and was met with surrounding powerlines catching fire and multiple homes engulfed in flames. Upon arrival, Deputy Yanzer sprang into action and immediately began escorting residents away from the flames to safety.

Without his courageous efforts, this situation may have taken a much darker turn.

At one point, Deputy Yanzer approached a woman in her driveway unable to retrieve her dog from the raging fire. He safely escorted the woman to safety and then went in to rescue the dog.

Deputy Yanzer rescued all residents and pets from the flames before firefighters arrived to extinguish the fires.

Deputy Yanzer is the 30th recipient of our Back the Blue Award since the program's inception in 2019.

To nominate a law enforcement officer, citizen or organization for a Back the Blue Award, or for more information about Attorney General Moody's Back the Blue campaign, click [here](#).

Thank you, Deputy Yanzer, for your bravery under pressure and willingness to risk your own safety to rescue others. You are a hero. With officers like you who serve valiantly across our state, we will continue building a Stronger, Safer Florida.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

In The News

Pasco County deputy honored for saving family from house fire, WTSP Tampa

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Attorney General Ashley Moody Participates in National Crackdown on Deceptive Income Scams, Space Coast Daily

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Ashley Moody: OSP Secured Funds for Victims of a Florida Timeshare Scam, Florida Daily

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‘Senior Sleuth’ volunteers help Florida seniors steer clear of scams, recover money, WSVN Miami

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Ashley Moody Calls on Congress to Do More to Protect Federal Judges, Florida Daily

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Participates in National Crackdown on Deceptive Income Schemes



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office announced Operation Income Illusion, a nationwide crackdown on scams that target consumers with false promises of income and financial independence. The impact of these scams has intensified this year as scammers take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic and financial crisis to exploit jobseekers. Attorney General Moody is joined by the Federal Trade Commission and other federal, state and local law enforcement partners in Operation Income Illusion.

Highlighted in the nationwide crackdown is Attorney General Moody's action against FirstUSA Business Development Inc—filed last month in Pinellas County. The complaint filed against FirstUSA alleges that the company induced consumers through telemarketing calls to purchase business coaching products and services, supposedly designed to help consumers start or improve a home-based internet business, but resulted in some consumers losing thousands of dollars without earning the profits promised or, in some instances, not even receiving the products or services. The defendants marketed these services to consumers in Florida and across the country.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Income scams prey on people who find themselves in financially vulnerable situations, such as a sudden loss of employment or imminent retirement with inadequate funding. With high unemployment and the ongoing financial impact brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more people are looking for innovative ways to make ends meet, making them more susceptible to income scams. Sadly, these scams produce the opposite results for income seekers—instead of gaining a paycheck, they lose money. I am proud to work with our federal and state partners to actively identify, investigate and stop these schemes in Florida and nationwide.” [Read More](#)



Attorney

General Ashley Moody, a former judge, is asking the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to better protect federal judges. Joined by a bipartisan coalition of 50 attorneys general, Attorney General Moody sent a letter to members of Congress urging support of federal legislation aimed at protecting the safety of federal judges and immediate family members.

Addressed to leaders of both the U.S. House and Senate Judiciary Committees, the letter supports passage of the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act or similar legislation. The bill would protect the confidentiality of personal identifying information of members of the federal judiciary in public records and limit the distribution of that information online and by data brokers.

The letter calls passage of such legislation an “urgent matter”—in light of attacks and increasing threats against members of the federal judiciary—and notes that the legislation has bipartisan support in both houses of Congress.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As a former judge, and the daughter of a sitting federal judge, I know firsthand the risks and sacrifices judges make to uphold their oaths and enforce the rule of law. It is infuriating and heartbreaking that these public servants and their families are being targeted because they volunteer to serve in these important roles.” [Read More](#)

CONSUMER ALERT: Beware of Pet Purchasing Scams this Holiday Season



Attorney General Ashley Moody issued a Consumer Alert offering tips to safeguard against pet-related holiday scams. The holidays mark a peak time for pet purchases as many Florida families look to welcome new four-legged friends into their homes. Unfortunately, this is also when scams that target consumers with phony or deceptive pet ads run rampant. Even worse, scammers may attempt to sell sick animals, animals with disorders, or returned animals previously deemed unfit for sale to unknowing consumers. Attorney General Moody is urging consumers to use caution when purchasing a pet this holiday season.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This is the time of year when families will often welcome new pets into their homes. Sadly, these families can be taken

advantage of by fraudsters who trick them into paying for a pet that is never delivered, or worse, deathly ill. If you plan to give or adopt a pet this holiday season, take steps to ensure you are getting exactly what you pay for.” [Read More](#)

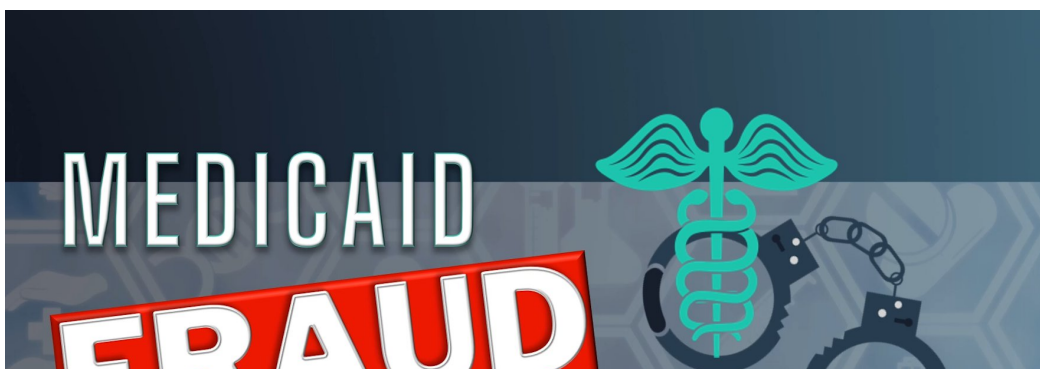


Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a 20-year prison sentence for a child sexual predator. Ryan Harding pleaded guilty to attempted sexual battery on a child under the age of 12 and several counts of possession of child pornography, among other charges stemming from his Aug. 28, 2018 arrest. Harding's lengthy prison sentence will be followed by five years of sex offender probation. Harding will also have to register as a sex offender for the remainder of his life.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The abuse and exploitation of a child is an act of pure evil. It is incredibly disturbing and heartbreaking to learn of victims going through years of this form of physical and psychological torture. I am proud of my Statewide Prosecutors for securing a lengthy prison sentence in this case. I hope this will bring some peace of mind to the victim as the healing process continues." [Read More](#)

Attorney General Moody Secures Millions from Pharmaceutical Companies Shortchanging Florida Medicaid Program



Attorney General Ashley Moody is taking action to claw back money owed to Florida's Medicaid Program. Following a multistate investigation into Royal Pharmaceuticals LLC and Seton Pharmaceuticals LLC, Attorney General Moody and a bipartisan group of attorneys general from across the country secured more than \$10 million for the states' Medicaid programs. The nationwide investigation found that the two jointly-held pharmaceutical companies underpaid Medicaid drug rebates to all 50 states from 2013 to 2017.

Florida's Medicaid program will receive more than \$4 million through efforts by Attorney General Moody and other state attorneys general.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "For years these pharmaceutical companies shortchanged Florida's Medicaid program—hurting the integrity of the taxpayer benefit and shortchanging Floridians. I am proud of the work of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the team of attorneys general who worked together to stop it and secure millions for our states' Medicaid programs." [Read More](#)



aby Formula Theft and

Polk County

Sheriff's Office Organized Retail Crime Detectives, working with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution, Ashley Moody, Attorney General, developed 8 suspects statewide during an investigation that started in August of 2019, responsible for the theft and illegal re-sale of high-dollar items such as baby formula, diapers, and energy drinks,

resulting in felony charges of grand theft and racketeering, among other crimes.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This is the second group of retail thieves brought to justice by Sheriff Judd’s Deputies and my Statewide Prosecutors this month. Criminals be warned: We will not allow rampant retail theft to harm Florida businesses and force consumers to pay inflated prices to cover the costs of your indolent, unscrupulous crime sprees. These businesses have to build into their budgets projected losses to organized crime rings and shoplifters. Inevitably, those losses get passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices at the cash register. When crime rings, like this one, steal from retailers, they are essentially stealing from all Floridians.” [Read More](#)

Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody joined Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis and Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried for a Florida Cabinet meeting in the State Capitol.



Attorney General Moody with leaders of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and 2019 FDLE Award winners before the Florida Cabinet meeting.



From left to right: FDLE Assistant Commissioner Michelle Pyle, Resident Agent in Charge James Flournoy, Jr., Officer Eric Cross, Attorney General Moody, FDLE Bureau Chief Sonya Avant, FDLE Network Systems Analyst Jason Floyd, FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen and FDLE Assistant Commissioner Tom Foy