Date March 04, 2022

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - March 4, 2022



This week, we are recognizing three years of the Back the Blue campaign. When I took office, I wanted to create an initiative that awarded Florida law enforcement who went above and beyond their call of duty and citizens who extraordinarily backed the blue. I also wanted to highlight those who forged positive relationships between law enforcement and their communities.

Throughout the campaign, I have met with some of the most amazing officers and citizens that Florida has to offer. Since its inception, 44 Back the Blue Awards have been presented to heroic Floridians and organizations that support law enforcement.

The award recipients varied from a law enforcement couple pausing their nuptials to rescue a car crash victim, to programs providing service dogs to local law enforcement agencies. Police officers, sheriff deputies, highway patrol troopers, police K-9s, private citizens and community organizations have all been recognized through the Back the Blue campaign.

There have been so many inspiring award winners over the years, and I look forward to meeting more of Florida’s best in the future.

If you know someone who deserves a Back the Blue Award, nominate them by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com/BackTheBlue.

It is because of these incredible award recipients—and the Floridians who passionately support law enforcement—that we will build a Stronger, Safer Florida.



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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody and FTC Shut Down Telemarketing Scam Targeting Credit Card Holders



Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Federal Trade Commission secured court orders permanently banning the operators of an alleged credit-card-interest-rate-reduction scam from working in the debt-relief industry. The defendants—Gino de Paz, Grace de Paz and Shabana Khublal—allegedly engaged in abusive and deceptive practices violating the FTC Act, the Telemarketing Sales Rule and the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act in selling credit-card-interest-rate-reduction services to consumers throughout the United States, including Florida seniors.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “These scammers lured victims—financially-distressed consumers, along with seniors—into signing up for their debt-relief scheme. Instead of receiving the promised relief, victims were brought down further into debt while the defendants made millions. Now, working with the FTC, we stopped the defendants from bombarding consumers in Florida with deceptive telemarketing calls promising financial relief, and they will be forced to pay.” Read More

Attorney General Moody Secures Nearly $2.1 Million in Private Debt Relief for Former Argosy University Students



Attorney General Ashley Moody is securing nearly $2.1 million in private debt relief for former Argosy University students. The school's abrupt closure in 2019 left students to pay off private loans received from the institution. Attorney General Moody, along with nine other state attorneys general, finalized the multistate action that will cancel outstanding principal and interest debt for former Argosy students. The action includes more than $54,000 in relief for students in Florida who attended Argosy's Tampa and Sarasota campuses, in addition to Florida students who enrolled in Argosy's online programs. The action also prevents further collection and negative credit reporting against harmed students.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This school falsely marketed itself as a nonprofit and issued private loans to students, who were then left with little financial recourse after the abrupt shutdown of the school. Through our aggressive multistate action, former students of the defunct university will now receive millions of dollars in debt relief."

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CONSUMER ALERT: Previously Compromised T-Mobile Customer Information Recently Discovered on Dark Web



Consumer data exposed during last year’s massive T-Mobile data-breach is now being found for sale on the dark web. Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging all Floridians who may be affected by the breach to take appropriate steps to protect personal information from identity thieves.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “It is extremely important that consumers who had their personal information exposed during last year’s T-Mobile data breach take immediate action to secure and protect their identities. A large subset of the information is being sold on the dark web, increasing the likelihood that the data breach victims could have their identities stolen and personal finances compromised.” Read More



…blic-School Employees

Attorney

General Ashley Moody is fighting to protect the religious freedom of public-school employees. Leading 26 other states, Attorney General Moody is urging the Supreme Court of the United States to reverse the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on Joseph A. Kennedy v. Bremerton School District. In this case, the Ninth Circuit failed to uphold the constitutional rights of a high school coach punished for praying alone on a football field in view of students.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “High school coaches, like other government employees, do not check their constitutional rights at the door when they agree to pursue a career of public service. We should be encouraging people of faith to pursue noble careers educating and coaching our youth.” Read More

Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution and FDLE Take Down Ponzi Scheme



Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Statewide Prosecutors worked with agents with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to arrest the owner of Platinum Bay Capital Management LLC for operating a Ponzi scheme. Americo “Rick” Antunes is charged with racketeering. The arrest follows a joint investigation by FDLE, Seminole County Sheriff’s Office Financial Crimes Taskforce and the Office of Financial Regulation.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This Ponzi scheme preyed on investors, ultimately conning six Floridians out of nearly $2 million. Working with state and local law enforcement, we stopped this scheme before more Floridians could be harmed, and now my Statewide Prosecutors will make sure the defendant answers for his crimes.” Read More

Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody spoke to the 200 Club of Jacksonville, a relief organization supporting law enforcement, first responders and their families. Attorney General Moody praised the club for its efforts going back nearly half a century.

