Date April 14, 2023

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - April 14, 2023



This week, we concluded the final installment of our Tax-Season Scams Series, highlighting a drastic increase in reports to the Internal Revenue Service about suspicious activity—a 300% increase from 2021 to 2022. We created this series to help protect Florida taxpayers from this alarming increase in suspicious activity. Throughout the past several weeks, we highlighted some of the most common tax-related scams, like:

- Fraudulent Tax Preparers: These imposter tax preparers, often advertising the cheapest rates or promise the greatest refunds, but their real goal is to obtain a victim's personal and financial information;
- Tax Identity Theft: When a bad actor uses, or attempts to use, personal information of another individual to steal a tax return;
- Refund Recalculation Scheme: Phishing messages sent to targets that look like a tax-refund payment or a recalculation of a tax refund. These messages contain a link asking targets to input personal information in order to claim a fake refund; and
- IRS Imposter Scams: When a scammer pretends to be the IRS by spoofing caller ID, emails or text messages to trick targets into believing the IRS is legitimately

attempting to make contact—all in an attempt to steal personal information.

For more information about all of these schemes, including tips about how to avoid tax-related scams, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.

Stay Safe, Florida.



In The News

Moody warns Floridians of tax-season scams, Bay News 9

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Be leery of crooks using tax season to steal your information, WFLA News Channel 8 Tampa

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Florida AG Moody Sues Biden Admin Over FOIA For Crack Pipe Records, The Tampa Free Press

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Florida attorney general calls on Congress to impeach DHS Secretary Mayorkas, Center Square Florida

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Florida AG warns of pet scams on National Pet Day, WPEC CBS 12 West Palm Beach

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Takes Legal Action to Investigate Whether Biden Used Taxpayer Dollars to Buy Crack Pipes for Drug Addicts



Attorney General Ashley Moody is demanding information about whether a Biden administration program used taxpayer money to purchase crack pipes for drug addicts. Attorney General Moody is taking legal action against two federal agencies due to withheld information with respect to the program's suspected practices. In February 2022, Florida sent Freedom of Information Act requests to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services seeking records regarding the alleged use of federal grant funds to promote drug use through safe smoking kits—in which some were reportedly found to include crack pipes and other drug-related paraphernalia. Now, more than a year later, with both agencies failing to reply to the state's request, Attorney General Moody is taking DOJ and HHS to court to bring the information to light.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "If Biden is using your tax dollars to buy crackpipes for drug addicts, you have the right to know. Our country is in the grips of a drug overdose crisis, and the Biden administration is stonewalling our requests and keeping the public in the dark about so many misguided, reckless policies. We are taking them to court to get answers for the American people." Read More

Following A Scathing Order Highlighting DHS's Abject Failure at the Border, AG Moody Calls on Congress to

Impeach Sec. Mayorkas



Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Congress to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas following a federal judge ruling against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Biden administration's unlawful immigration policies in a case brought by Florida. Over the past two years, the situation at the border is only getting worse because of Mayorkas's actions. Attorney General Moody is urging Congressional leaders to initiate impeachment proceedings to remove Mayorkas from his post.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "As a federal court ruled in our case, Biden and Mayorkas have turned the U.S. Southwest Border into nothing more than a 'speedbump.' The court highlighted several other abject failures by DHS, led by Mayorkas. If he is unwilling to do the patriotic thing and resign his position, then Congress must initiate impeachment proceedings to get rid of this threat to our national security."

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AG Moody and FTC Take Action to Shut Down Illegal Business Practices by Chargeback Company Impeding Consumers Disputing Credit Card Charges



Attorney

General Ashley Moody is taking action against a company for helping businesses avoid credit card chargebacks from consumers. In a complaint filed in federal court, Attorney General Moody and the Federal Trade Commission allege that Chargebacks911 and its owners, Gary Cardone and Monica Eaton Cardone, are engaging in deceptive and unfair practices in violation of Florida law and the FTC Act by wrongfully impeding consumers' attempts to dispute credit card charges through the chargeback process.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This company helped businesses fight consumer challenges to credit card charges—using false evidence. My Consumer Protection team, with the Federal Trade Commission, filed an action to shut down these illegal practices, and will continue fighting on behalf of Floridians." Read More

CONSUMER ALERT: Attorney General Moody Provides Tips for Floridians to Avoid Puppy Scams on National Pet Day



On National Pet Day, Attorney General Ashley Moody is providing tips for Floridians to avoid falling for puppy scams. The Better Business Bureau reports that the average monetary losses to such schemes are rising, even as cases are on the decline. Attorney General Moody is urging consumers to be cautious when searching for a new furry friend.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “On National Pet Day, I am urging Floridians to be careful when searching for a new, four-legged family member. Scammers may try to take advantage of consumers when looking to purchase a puppy—I’m issuing tips and a new infographic designed to help future pet owners avoid falling for scams.”

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Attorney General Moody Activates Price Gouging Hotline Following State of Emergency Declaration for Broward County



Attorney General Ashley Moody is activating Florida's Price Gouging Hotline following reports of extreme flooding in Broward County. The following expansion comes as Gov. Ron DeSantis declares of a state of emergency due to areas of Broward County that are flooded after receiving heavy rainfall of more than 25 inches.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "With the declared state of emergency in Broward County for extreme flooding, I am activating Florida's Price Gouging Hotline to protect Floridians from any unlawful increases."

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Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody congratulated Director of Law Enforcement Relations and Victim Services Gary Howze on becoming the new Colonel of the Florida Highway Patrol. Gary served the Florida Attorney General's





Attorney General Moody with University of South Florida students involved with the USF Tallahassee Internship Program.

