

Date July 17, 2020

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - July 17, 2020



This week, I issued a Consumer Alert to remind Floridians that restitution is still available for victims of tech support scams. However, the deadline is fast approaching and eligible consumers must file a claim soon.

The multimillion dollar claims process is the result of action taken by my Consumer Protection Division to shut down several tech support scams. Seven million dollars is now available to pay victims of these scams, but eligible consumers must act before the Aug. 30 deadline to receive restitution.

To find out more, visit FloridaAGReimbursement.com.

Over the past several years, our office has successfully shut down 13 tech support scams—representing the most tech support scam cases filed by any single state agency in the country. Our most recent case involved a company operating out of Sunrise, [American PC Corporation](#).

Tech support scams typically involve fake pop-up messages or imposter phone calls

claiming that a consumer's computer is infected with malware that poses an imminent risk to the device. Fraudsters will request virtual access to a victim's computer to supposedly fix the nonexistent problem.

Some tips to avoid tech support scams include:

- NEVER click on links or call phone numbers provided on pop-up ads or emails;
- NEVER give anyone control of personal computers or electronic devices;
- NEVER go online without up-to-date security software; and
- NEVER send money in response to an online solicitation.

By following these simple steps, you can avoid tech support scams and help us build 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

AG Moody reminding victims of tech support scams they can claim millions of dollars in restitution, ABC Action News

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Ashley Moody: Millions Available in Tech Support Scam Restitution as August Deadline Looms, Florida Daily

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National Credit Reporting Agencies Offering Free Weekly Credit Reports Through April 2021, Space Coast Daily

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\$16M in refunds given to debt relief operation scam victims, WPEC West Palm Beach

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5 caught, 2 sought in Broward-based auto sales racketeering case, Sun Sentinel

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Some Floridians worry contact tracing calls are scams. State urges you to respond, Miami Herald

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Protecting Floridians

Woman Arrested for Exploiting \$14,000 from Elderly Adult in a Nursing Home



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit announced the arrest of Emily Royster for exploiting an elderly and disabled adult. The investigation revealed that Royster siphoned more than \$14,000 from an elderly victim's bank account over a seven-month period. Royster allegedly transferred funds for personal use with the intent to deprive the victim of the use or benefits of the funds, including making nursing home payments.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The victim relied on this defendant and put her in a position of trust and confidence to make sure she was taken care of. It disgusts me when one can so easily take advantage of a vulnerable adult all for personal benefit. While the defendant was gallivanting around the country with the victim's funds, this elderly victim was at risk of losing nursing home care. My office will not allow the exploitation of any elderly adult and this defendant will be held responsible." [Read More](#)

Capital City Health Care Provider Arrest for \$50,000 in Medicaid Fraud



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, with the assistance of the Leon County Sheriff's Office, arrested a Medicaid provider on charges related to \$50,000 in fraud. The arrest follows an MFCU investigation that revealed Rodney Burt, 57, billed the Florida Medicaid Program for services not rendered from May 2016 through November 2019.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Participation in Florida's Medicaid Program is increasing during this health crisis, and we will do everything in our power to protect taxpayer funds from fraud. That is why my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit attorneys and investigators aggressively chase down leads and uncover abuses in this taxpayer funded health care program to ensure those who would aim to rip off taxpayers are stopped and brought to justice."

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Five Arrested in Connection to Crimes at Florida Car Dealership

Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



ASHLEY MOODY
Stronger, Safer Florida

Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution, in coordination with the Florida Highway Patrol, identified a dealership in Broward County and Osceola County involved in a complex fraud scheme. Investigators established that the criminal enterprise, operating out of Auto Sports of South Florida, engaged in a scheme to fraudulently take possession of vehicles and apply for duplicate titles by utilizing fictitious documents and methods. So far, law enforcement arrested five suspects in the scheme with two arrests pending.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Purchasing a new car is an exciting time and milestone for many. The process of car ownership should never involve consumers worrying about the legitimacy of their new purchase. These scammers fraudulently took possession of vehicles and created fake documents to obtain titles, all to make a dishonest dollar at the expense of consumers. I'm proud to have my Office of Statewide Prosecution partner with FHP and local law enforcement to take these criminals down." [Read More](#)

CONSUMER ALERT: Deadline Approaching for Restitution Claims in Yahoo Data Breach Case



The Florida Attorney General's Office issued a Consumer Alert to urge victims of the Yahoo Inc. and Aabaco Small Business, LLC's data breaches to claim millions of dollars made available for restitution. Individuals with Yahoo accounts between Jan. 1, 2012 and Dec. 31, 2016 are entitled to settlement claims and free credit monitoring. The deadline to file a claim is July 20. [Read More](#)



of Bogus Debt Relief

Attorney

General Ashley Moody and the Federal Trade Commission announced more than \$16 million is now being distributed to victims of a debt relief scam. The scam targeted thousands of consumers facing financial difficulty in Florida and across the nation. The millions in restitution culminates from a joint lawsuit brought by Attorney General Moody's Consumer Protection Division and the FTC against a group of defendants known as Helping America Group for allegedly convincing victims to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars a month by falsely promising to pay, settle or obtain dismissal of debts and improve payors' credit scores. Instead, victims discovered debts unpaid, accounts in default and credit scores severely damaged—some were sued by creditors, and others were forced into bankruptcy.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It infuriates me that anyone would take advantage of people trying to pay off their debts and improve their financial situations. Thankfully, our office, working together with the FTC, has now recovered millions to be returned to the victims of this appalling scam." [Read More](#)



Interest Rate Reduction

At the request of

Attorney General Ashley Moody, along with the Federal Trade Commission, a federal district court is temporarily banning a group of Orlando-based businesses and owners from conducting an alleged sham credit card interest rate reduction operation targeting financially distressed consumers and older adults. The court's order temporarily halts the operation, freezes its assets and appoints a temporary receiver over the business.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “It is reprehensible that fraudsters would exploit financially distressed individuals struggling for assistance to meet their financial obligations. These telemarketing scammers allegedly hid their identities and reaped millions of dollars at the expense of vulnerable consumers. I am proud to partner with the FTC to stop this fraud, particularly during these unprecedented times of economic strain on so many consumers and legitimate business creditors.”

[Read More](#)



The Florida

Office of Financial Regulation announced that Walter Ozell Weatherington was arrested and charged with grand theft and organized fraud for his alleged role in orchestrating an advance fee for loan scam. The case is being prosecuted by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Office of Statewide Prosecution.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “My Statewide Prosecutors work diligently to fight fraud and stop scams targeting Floridians. This case is a great example of the work our office does every day to protect Floridians and bring to justice those unscrupulous individuals exploiting the good faith of others—all in an effort to make a dishonest dollar. I want to thank OFR Commissioner Weigel for working with our office on this organized fraud case and for partnering with our Statewide Prosecutors to build a Stronger, Safer Florida.” [Read More](#)