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## **Florida Attorney General's Office News Release**

### **Six Arrested for Stealing Identities of Florida Seniors**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution today announced the final arrest of six individuals suspected of stealing the personal information of more than 100 victims—including dozens of Florida seniors. The arrests follow an investigation by Attorney General Moody's OSP, the Hillsborough County's Sheriff's Office, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and St. Petersburg Police Department. According to the investigation, Samishia Askew, Gregory Engram, Carnessa Rouse, Towan Rush, Donta White and Valisha Williams used the victims' personal information to obtain scores of credit cards from multiple banks. Losses totaled more than \$650,000. PCSO took Williams, the final defendant arrested, into custody earlier this week.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "I am outraged that anyone would target Florida seniors in this way—stealing their identities to open fraudulent credit card accounts. We will not allow criminal organizations to prey on seniors in Florida, and my Office of Statewide Prosecution will continue to partner with our great law enforcement agencies to stop fraud and ensure those that would exploit Floridians—especially our seniors—will face justice."

According to the investigation, the defendants' illicit activity began in January 2017 and continued until the end of April 2018. The defendants allegedly purchased the personal information of the victims online and then applied for credit cards that were sent to various addresses in Florida. Once acquired, the defendants listed themselves or aliases as authorized users for the credit cards. The defendants also owned fraudulent driver's licenses that could be produced when needed.

The six defendants used the stolen credit cards to purchase merchandise, pay rent and utility bills, rent luxury cars, buy airplane tickets, rent hotel rooms and obtain cash. The defendants' crimes were concentrated in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Saint Lucie counties.

One of the defendants, Engram, is finishing a prison sentence in California and will be extradited to Florida afterwards.

Attorney General Moody's Assistant Statewide Prosecutor George Bedell will prosecute the case.