

Date January 17, 2019

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - Jan. 18, 2019



As Florida's Attorney General, I am committed to working with our law enforcement partners to stop human trafficking and rescue survivors. This week, I joined St. Petersburg Police Chief Anthony Holloway to announce the arrest of seven individuals on human trafficking charges involving a Florida teenager. The victim in this case was lured away from his family with promises of a better life. Instead, he was moved into a filthy trailer and used as a sex slave for nearly a year.

Thanks to the great collaborative work between law enforcement and our Office of Statewide Prosecution, the teenage victim in this case has been rescued and is receiving specialized trauma-informed care designed for victims of human trafficking at a Florida safe house.

As a mother, I am extremely disturbed by the facts of this case, and I pledge to work daily with our prosecutors and great law enforcement partners to end this abhorrent crime. Serving as Chair of Florida's Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, I will bring together all of our partners in an effort to spot trends, stay one step ahead of traffickers and identify resources to help survivors thrive.

January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and in closing, I pledge that I will fight tirelessly to stop these evil acts that take away people's basic human rights—and do everything in my power to see that anyone caught engaging in human trafficking is brought to justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial letter.

In The News

St. Pete police: Six arrested after boy held prisoner, sexually battered, Tampa Bay Times

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7th suspect in St. Pete sex slave case in custody, WFLA

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Gaming App Used By Florida Sex Traffickers To Lure Teen, AG Ashley Moody Calls Details 'Disturbing', Space Coast Daily

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'Fortnite': Florida Man Used Online Game to Lure Teen for Child Pornography, Attorney General Says, Newsweek

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Florida man faces child pornography charges; victim contacted through Fortnite, Palm Beach Post

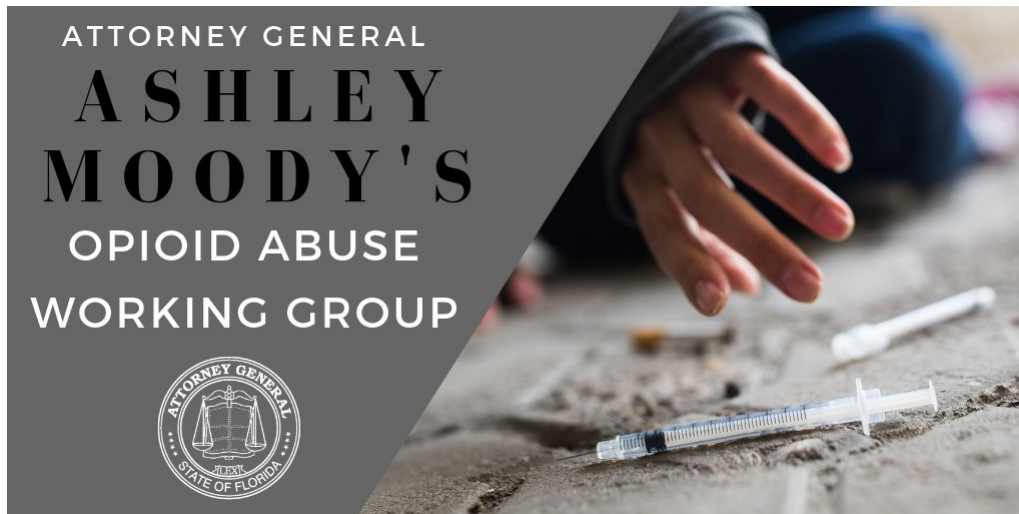
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Wednesday Editorial: Moody is acting quickly on major issues, Florida Times-Union

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Announces Action to Combat the Opioid Epidemic



Attorney General Ashley Moody named 18 experts and community leaders to serve on the Opioid Abuse Working Group, including previously named Chair, Sheriff Dennis Lemma. The group will gather information and best practices from across Florida to help General Moody combat the opioid epidemic.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As Attorney General, one of my top priorities is to combat the opioid epidemic. Therefore, one of my first actions in my role is to announce these experts from across the state who will find solutions to fight this crisis. These individuals care deeply about the safety of all Floridians and will strive to find the best answers. Florida must be a leader in fighting this national epidemic and I am confident my Opioid Abuse Working Group will help us make a difference.”

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Attorney General Ashley Moody said,

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ASHLEY MOODY
Stronger, Safer Florida



"As Attorney

General, one of my top priorities is to combat the opioid epidemic. Therefore, one of my first actions in my role is to announce these experts from across the state who will find solutions to fight this crisis. These individuals care deeply about the safety of all Floridians and will strive to find the best answers. Florida must be a leader in fighting this national epidemic and I am confident my Opioid Abuse Working Group will help us make a difference." [Read More](#)

Deadly Heroin and Synthetic Opioids Seized in Drug Trafficking Bust

Attorney General Ashley Moody

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Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution and the Drug Enforcement Administration announced the arrests of two drug traffickers transporting methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl into Florida. DEA agents, working with the Office of Statewide Prosecution, arrested Christopher Lavant and Jeffrey Richardson on Thursday in Manatee County on charges related to the trafficking of 474 grams of methamphetamine and 532 grams heroin mixed with fentanyl.

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Child Pornography Victim Recruited While Playing Fortnite



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution announced the arrest of a man accused of offenses related to unlawful sex with a minor including 22 counts of child pornography. Anthony Gene Thomas, 41, of Broward County, allegedly engaged in sexual activity with a minor and solicited pornographic photos and videos of the victim. According to the investigation, initiated by the Broward Sheriff's Office Internet Crimes Against Children Unit, Thomas first contacted the victim through the popular online game Fortnite. Authorities believe there could be as many as 20 additional victims.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This case is unsettling, not only because it involves child pornography, but also because a popular online game was used to communicate with the victim. We have reason to believe there could be additional victims, and I am asking anyone with information about the recruiting of minors for child pornography, or any other type of sexual exploitation, to call law enforcement immediately. Additionally, parents need to know that predators will use any means possible to target and exploit a child. I am asking parents and guardians to please make sure you know who your children meet online, and talk to them about sexual predators."

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Authorities Arrest Eight in Statewide Business Fraud with Ringleader Operating from Prison



Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Office of Statewide Prosecution and the Polk County Sheriff’s Office announced the arrests of eight people working together in an intricate theft scheme that resulted in more than \$100,000 in losses. The operation used a stolen business account of a custom home building company to purchase Visa/Mastercard gift cards and miscellaneous merchandise from Home Depot and Lowes. The ringleader of the group, Bobby Staley, conducted the operation from Liberty Correctional Institute in Liberty County. Other members of the group worked out of Jacksonville, Tampa and Fort Lauderdale. [Read More](#)

Man Sentenced to 30 Years in Missing Person Cold Case

Attorney General Ashley Moody

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Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution announced the sentencing of a habitual offender, Andrelo Witcher, to 30 years in prison for the disappearance of a past girlfriend, Heather Ann MacCrossen, more than a decade ago. On Friday, Alachua County Circuit Judge Mark Mosely handed down the maximum sentence. On Dec. 6, 2018, an Alachua County jury found Witcher guilty of killing MacCrossen.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Cold cases are some of the most difficult crimes to solve, but due to the hard work of law enforcement and prosecutors this decade old case is now closed, and a violent criminal will be kept off the streets. I am grateful for our Office of Statewide Prosecution, the local state attorney's offices and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office for their outstanding efforts on this case. Florida is safer because of their relentless work. I urge anyone subjected to domestic violence to please call the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 500-1119."

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Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody held meetings with multiple Florida law enforcement organizations. Pictured with the Attorney General from left to right are Florida Sheriffs Association Deputy Executive Director of Operations Matt Dunagan, FSA Executive Director Steve Casey, Florida Police Chief Association Executive



Attorney General Moody also met with members of the Florida Police Benevolent Association and the Florida Fraternal Order of Police. Pictured with the Attorney General from left to right are FPBA Senior Vice President Mick McHale, FPBA Legislative Services representative Gary Bradford and FFOP President Robert Jenkins.



Attorney General Moody visiting the Attorney General's Tampa field office and





Attorney General Moody congratulating Denise Hair, the Office Automation Analyst for the eDiscovery and Litigation Support Center, for 35 years of service with the state of Florida. Attorney General Moody presenting Denise an award thanking her for decades of service.

