

Date May 07, 2020

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - May 8, 2020



Throughout this health crisis we have seen a steady increase in COVID-19 related robocalls, and this week, my office, along with a bipartisan coalition of 52 attorneys general, requested more tools to stop these scam messages.

We are urging USTelecom and its Industry Traceback Group to further develop robocall traceback and other tools in an effort to improve enforcement against illegal robocalls. Our coalition sent a letter to USTelecom asking them to advance the Industry Traceback Group's abilities in identifying robocall campaigns, trends and business ecosystems; conducting automated traceback investigations; and coordinating with relevant law enforcement agencies.

We have seen an uptick in illegal robocalls during the COVID-19 pandemic, and these enhancements will allow us to more aggressively track, trace and investigate illegal robocall operations to protect Floridians.

I am proud to stand with my fellow attorneys general to stop this illegal and unrelenting practice, as well as assist law enforcement by making sure they have the latest tools needed to combat these illegal operations.

My office continues to be an active leader in fighting illegal robocalls, pressing

Congress to pass stricter regulations and most recently, [warning Floridians](#) about the increase of COVID-19 related robocalls and steps they can take to avoid falling for these scam messages.

The best advice I can give anyone receiving an illegal robocall is, just hang up. Then report the call to the FTC online at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

Please educate yourself about illegal robocalls and COVID-19 related scams by visiting our [Consumer Alert page](#), and remember, if we work together, we can end this crisis.

Stay safe, Florida.

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

In The News

Ashley Moody Pushes for More Aggressive Tools to Fight Illegal Robocalls During Coronavirus Pandemic, Florida Daily

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Price gouging complaints lead to \$350K in refunds, WJXT Jacksonville

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Attorney General's office refunds nearly \$350,000 in overcharged, high demand products, WINK News

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\$350,000 returned to Floridians amid price gouging investigations, WESH Orlando

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Moody: Price-Gouging Not Tolerated in Florida, WUWF Northwest Florida

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Woman arrested for stealing Hurricane Michael insurance money and government benefits, Attorney General says, WCTV Tallahassee

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Pasco son accused of stealing thousands from elderly, disabled parents, Tampa Bay Times

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Florida Cancer Specialists agrees to \$120M in antitrust-related penalties, Fort Myers News-Press

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Moody Reaches \$20M Settlement In Oncology Probe, Health News Florida

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Ashley Moody Announces Multimillion-Dollar Agreement with Statewide Oncology Practice, Florida Daily

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Uber to provide free shelter rides for domestic violence victims in 3 Florida counties, Miami Herald

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Ashley Moody, Uber announce free rides away from domestic violence, Florida Politics

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Free Uber rides available for domestic violence victims, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody says, ABC Action News

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WATCH: Florida Attorney General Highlights How to Report Scamming with the 'No Scam' App, Space Coast Daily

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FTC: Over 36,000 coronavirus fraud complaints with \$24.4M in losses this year, WJXT Jacksonville

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Price gouging complaints lead to refunds, WPEC West Palm Beach

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Florida Attorney General Works with Uber to Help Domestic Violence Victims Escape Abuse, Space Coast Daily

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Attorney General: COVID-19 hasn't slowed down human traffickers, Florida Politics

Protecting Floridians

Woman Arrested for Stealing Hurricane Michael Insurance Money and Government Benefits



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit announced the arrest of a woman for exploitation of an elderly adult. The arrest follows an investigation by MFCU and the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs that uncovered Billie Jo Ethridge used power of attorney to steal veterans benefits and property insurance money awarded to a senior for home repairs due to damage caused by Hurricane Michael. According to the investigation, over an eight-month period, Ethridge used her position to take more than \$63,000 from the senior victim.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "A senior who suffered property damage due to Hurricane Michael trusted the defendant with important financial decisions. Instead of using the insurance payments to repair the victim's home, the defendant stole the money for her own personal use. We will not tolerate the exploitation of our seniors and I am proud of the work of our MFCU investigators, partnering with the VA, to hold this defendant accountable for these despicable actions." [Read More](#)

Pasco County Resident Arrested for Identity Theft and Exploitation of an Elderly Person or Disabled Adult

Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



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General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Tarpon Springs Police Department arrested a Pasco County resident for exploiting two seniors under the defendant's care. Ronald Rose, Jr., 48, withdrew thousands of dollars from the relatives' bank accounts without approval to spend on personal expenses such as rent, vehicle payments and phone services.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "My office is committed to protecting seniors. Older Floridians should not have to worry about being taken advantage of by those entrusted with their care. Thank you, to my MFCU team, for stopping this unconscionable behavior and I look forward to my Office of Statewide Prosecution now holding the defendant responsible for these crimes." [Read More](#)

Attorney General Moody Encourages Vigilance in Protecting Human Trafficking Victims During COVID-19

Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



ASHLEY MOODY
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Attorney

General Ashley Moody is reminding the public that human trafficking continues to plague the state and the country despite the health risks of COVID-19. We must stay vigilant in reporting human trafficking and victims should know that resources are still available.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Human traffickers aren’t stopping despite the health threats from COVID-19—and neither will we cease our efforts to stop them. It is abhorrent that unscrupulous individuals would take advantage of the pandemic and try to lure people through the use of force, fraud or coercion for nefarious purposes when so many find themselves on hard times. We need to continue to be vigilant in our fight to combat human trafficking. Know the signs of human trafficking, and if you see something, say something.

“The National Human Trafficking Hotline remains fully operational. If you suspect human trafficking, or if you are a victim yourself, there are resources available and by calling Polaris at 1(888) 373-7888, the hotline can help finding safe ways to escape abusers and shelter in place.” [Read More](#)

Former Florida State Hospital Employee Arrested for Abusing Disabled Adult



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Baker County Sheriff's Office arrested a former Northeast Florida State Hospital employee for abusing a disabled adult. Cami Leann Craig allegedly antagonized, sprayed a liquid chemical at, and then chased a disabled adult patient. While fleeing from Craig, the victim ran into a concrete wall causing injury to the victim's head.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This incident is extremely concerning, and it is heartbreaking to imagine how scared the victim must have been to flee so abruptly from a caregiver. We trust these caregivers to take care of some of the most vulnerable Floridians and this violent behavior will not be tolerated by my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit." [Read More](#)