

Date July 22, 2022

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - July 22, 2022



This week, I urged President Joe Biden to classify illicit fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, a WMD is defined as a nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological or other device that is intended to harm a large number of people. In 2018, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate assessed that "fentanyl is very likely a viable option for a chemical weapon attack."

We have seen a meteoric increase in deaths across the country related to fentanyl, and this month alone Florida has seen two mass fentanyl overdose events. Last Tuesday, in [Tampa](#), police responded to a convenience store where seven individuals were found unresponsive after consuming drugs laced with fentanyl. Over the recent Fourth of July weekend in Gadsden County, at least 19 people overdosed on fentanyl. Back in March, five West Point cadets overdosed on cocaine mixed with fentanyl while on spring break in Wilton Manors—exposing a first responder who also overdosed attempting to resuscitate the cadets.

According to reports, more than 75,000 Americans died last year due to opioids, with

the primary killer being fentanyl. Now, more than 200 Americans die every day from opioids, and fentanyl is the number one killer of adults aged 18-45, claiming more young lives than cancer, car accidents, COVID-19 or suicide.

Classifying this deadly drug as a WMD enables and requires more parts of the federal government to coordinate a uniform response, including the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Drug Enforcement Administration and Department of Defense.

The federal government already works to disrupt the supply chains of other chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons—it's not hard to imagine that similar tactics could be used to reduce the flow of illicit fentanyl into the U.S.—and save countless American lives. I am urging the president to take immediate and decisive steps to protect Americans from this poison flooding into our country. I am committed to doing everything in my power to stop this deadly substance, and we will continue to raise these alarms, to build a Stronger, Safer Florida.

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

Florida Attorney General to President Biden: Classify fentanyl as 'weapon of mass destruction', The Florida Times-Union

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Florida's AG Wants Biden to Declare Fentanyl Weapon of Mass Destruction, WINK News

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Florida's attorney general wants President Biden to declare fentanyl a "weapon of mass destruction", CBS Miami

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Florida attorney general urges President Biden to classify fentanyl as WMD, WFTV Orlando

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Florida AG taking action against jewelry company that allegedly deceived military families, WEAR-TV Pensacola

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Ashley Moody, FTC, State AGs Go After Deceptive Company Targeting Military Members and Families, Florida Daily

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Attorney General Moody launches series to prevent summer scams, Islander Media Group

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Florida students may be targeted by summer employment scams, Moody says, CBS 12 News

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Protecting Floridians



Attorney

General Ashley Moody announced that Officer Jose Castellanos of the Sarasota County Schools Police Department is the winner of the 2022 School Resource Officer of the Year Award. Officer Castellanos moved from the New York Police Department to the SCSPD, becoming a Florida hero for students. Providing security for the school, as well as mentoring students, Officer Castellanos is making a positive impact on the lives of those he serves.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “We ask officers from other states who may feel unacknowledged for their work to move to Florida—the most pro-law enforcement state in the nation. Officer Castellanos answered that call, and we are proud to welcome him into our law enforcement family. His work serving students is leaving a lasting, positive impact on lives across the school district. I am excited to name Officer Castellanos the 2022 School Resource Officer of the Year, and I want to use this opportunity to encourage other officers from around the country to follow in his footsteps and become a Florida hero.” [Read More](#)

Attorney General Moody Secures More Than \$34 Million in Relief From Deceptive Company Targeting Military Members and Their Families



Attorney General Ashley Moody, working with a multistate coalition of state attorneys general and the Federal Trade Commission, is taking action against a jewelry company that targeted military members and families with deceptive and unfair practices. The joint action is being filed against Harris Originals of New York, aka Harris Jewelry, to secure more than \$34 million in total relief—including up to \$13.6 million in restitution and refunds to consumers, with approximately \$1.7 million in relief to Florida consumers.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Exploiting and targeting military service members, especially by preying on young recruits, to sell jewelry with highly unfavorable payment terms is unconscionable. Fortunately, as a result of this joint effort, Harris Jewelry will not be able to prey on our courageous service members or their families anymore. There is no better time than now, during Military Consumer Protection Month, to remind our brave patriots to be on guard against schemes and deceptive practices that target service members, and to report scams to our office.”

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Attorney General Moody Announces Arrest of Man Stealing Thousands From Seniors Through Fraudulent Tech Support

Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



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Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution, with the assistance of the Port St. Lucie Police Department, arrested a man for stealing thousands of dollars from more than a dozen senior victims in a tech-support scam. Maninder Singh Bawa targeted victims, all above the age of 60, by sending pop-up computer notifications claiming the victims' devices were locked and then provided a number to call to have the devices unlocked. Over the phone, Bawa tricked each victim into sending thousands of dollars in fees as payment for unlocking the devices.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These victims, all seniors, panicked after finding their computers locked, and reached out to who they thought would provide a helping hand. Instead, they were duped by a con man who squeezed them for ludicrous amounts of money. My Statewide Prosecutors will now make sure this defendant faces justice." [Read More](#)

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Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



FDLE and the

Brevard County Sheriff's Office arrested Marc Phillips Dinkels, 33, of Vero Beach, on two counts of human trafficking and one count each of lewd and lascivious battery, use of a child in sexual performance, unlawful sexual activity with certain minors, unlawful use of a two-way communication device to facilitate the commission of a felony and battery. The agencies also arrested Taylor Kathleen Brandt, 19, of Palm Bay, for two counts of lewd and lascivious battery and one count each of human trafficking, use of a child in a sexual performance and use of a two-way communication device to facilitate a felony.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This sick criminal duo used social media to target and lure young girls for sex, including a 14-year-old from a foster home. I am thankful for the multiple law enforcement agencies that investigated this case, and I look forward to my Statewide Prosecutors securing convictions for these loathsome predators." [Read More](#)

Drug Trafficking Organization Dismantled With Arrest Of Ex-Prison Guard & Supplier

Attorney General Ashley Moody

NEWS ALERT



ASHLEY MOODY
Stronger, Safer Florida

A drug

trafficking ring run by a former state correctional officer living in Volusia County has been dismantled following a long-term investigation that resulted in her arrest, along with the arrests of her supplier and several other members of her organization.

In March 2021, the Volusia Bureau of Investigation (VBI) along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), began a multi-jurisdictional investigation into a drug trafficking organization led by ex-Florida Department of Corrections Prison Guard Christina Guess (DOB 5/15/1978) and supplied by Reshard Campbell (DOB 8/7/1995), who were responsible for distributing kilogram amounts of methamphetamine in Volusia County and Lake County on a monthly basis. It's believed the organization trafficked up to 24 pounds of uncut methamphetamine over a one-year period.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This operation is responsible for distributing pounds of methamphetamine and other deadly substances throughout Volusia and Lake counties on a monthly basis. I am thankful for the joint investigative efforts to dismantle this dangerous drug trafficking ring, and now my Statewide Prosecutors will ensure they pay for their crimes." [Read More](#)