

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Attorney General is the state's legal officer, responsible for protecting the interests of the state and its residents. The office provides services covering a broad range of issues reaching every corner of the state. Attorney General Lisa Madigan has worked to protect consumers, help crime victims, safeguard communities, preserve the environment, advocate a more transparent and accountable government, and defend the rights of Illinoisans.

Protecting Consumers

The Consumer Protection Division receives more than 33,000 consumer complaints annually, covering issues such as home and vehicle repair fraud, telecommunications fraud, counterfeit check scams and identity theft. The Attorney General's office files lawsuits to stop fraudulent practices and recover losses, mediates consumer complaints, and educates consumers on scams and product recalls.

Attorney General Madigan has drafted numerous laws protecting consumers against predatory lending and mortgage fraud, including the Mortgage Rescue Fraud Act and the Homeownership Preservation Act of 2009. In 2008, Madigan negotiated a groundbreaking \$8.7 billion settlement in a national predatory lending lawsuit against Countrywide Home Loans, Inc. The settlement established the first mandatory loan modification program in the country and serves as a model for lenders and the federal government on how to help homeowners stay in their homes and stabilize communities. In 2009, Madigan's office sued Wells Fargo for consumer fraud and discriminating against African-American and Latino homeowners by selling them high-cost subprime mortgage loans. The office also created the Homeowner Helpline to assist Illinois residents facing foreclosure.

Madigan's office operates a statewide Identity Theft Hotline for victims of identity theft. The office also works to remove dangerous products from Illinois stores, especially unsafe sleeping products such as baby cribs and bassinets, and children's products contain-



Attorney General Lisa Madigan discusses the resources available from the Attorney General's office to help homeowners in crisis. Madigan's office has filed numerous lawsuits against companies that have taken advantage of vulnerable homeowners.



Attorney General Madigan and Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids in Danger, examine a recalled baby bassinet. Madigan called on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to develop a second-hand market strategy to curb the sale of dangerous recalled products at online sites and in community resale shops.

ing harmful levels of lead. The Consumer Protection Division also registers and monitors all Illinois charities and franchises, and the Health Care Bureau assists consumers in mediating complaints relating to health-care providers and insurance companies.

Keeping Communities Safe

The Attorney General's office works with law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys to make Illinois a safer place to live, work and raise children. The office created the Illinois Sex Offender Registry Team (I-SORT), a statewide law enforcement group focused on improving the state's sex offender registry and locating dangerous predators. The office also works closely with law enforcement to prosecute cases, strengthen laws and increase public awareness of the dangers of methamphetamine.

The office dedicates significant resources to high-tech crime investigations targeting Internet predators. The High-Tech Crimes Bureau runs the federal Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, a collaboration of 122 law enforcement agencies in Illinois. The bureau offers investigation and prosecution assistance in cases around the state. The office also launched a comprehensive Internet Safety Education program to provide children, parents and teachers with the tools needed to avoid online dangers.

Attorney General Madigan has initiated innovative programs to protect women and children from sexual and domestic violence. The office offers training programs for law enforcement and first responders to help prevent and solve crimes against women and children and prosecute offenders. In 2009, Madigan authored significant improvements to Illinois' stalking law and created the state's first Stalking No Contact Order to protect vulnerable stalking victims. The office also created an order of protection short form notification and launched the Serve to Protect project to increase service of orders of protection and better enforce the laws protecting victims of domestic violence.

Helping Crime Victims

The office's Crime Victims Compensation Bureau provides financial assistance to innocent victims of violent crimes and their families. Domestic violence victims also can

receive financial assistance for relocation and moving expenses under a law drafted by Attorney General Madigan in 2005.

The Violent Crime Victim Assistance Program awards about \$8 million in grant funding to programs and agencies that provide services to victims of violent crimes. Funding for the program is generated from fees and fines imposed on convicted criminals and traffic offenders. The office's Automated Victim Notification System provides a toll-free, bilingual, 24-hour telephone and e-mail service for victims and family members to inquire about offender custody and case status. In July 2009, a federal grant enhanced the system by providing telephone and e-mail notifications relating to sex offenders.

Safeguarding the Environment

The Attorney General's office has taken the lead in protecting Illinois' air, water and land from pollution. Attorney General Madigan successfully pursued the largest Clean Air Act enforcement case in the history of Illinois, which required the defendant to spend more than \$545 million on pollution-reduction projects at its Illinois facilities.

In 2007, the office led negotiations to develop the state's Renewable Energy Standard and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard. As a result, Commonwealth Edison Company and the Ameren Illinois Utilities are required to purchase electricity generated using renewable resources. In 2008, Attorney General Madigan negotiated legislation that requires alternative retail electric suppliers to comply with the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

Protecting Older Citizens

The Attorney General's Senior Fraud Hotline offers assistance and referrals for elderly citizens. The office also works with other state agencies, law enforcement officials and community leaders to address elder abuse and neglect and protect seniors in long-term care facilities. The office partnered with the Department on Aging to create the Nursing Home Resident's Right to Know Act to assist families in finding the appropriate long-term care facility for their aging loved ones. Attorney General Madigan also authored the Vulnerable Adults Protection Act, which requires the identification and individualized management of convicted sex offenders or felons residing in Illinois' long-term care facilities.

Representing the State of Illinois

The Government Representation Division provides legal representation for the state and all state offices, boards, commissions, agencies and employees in civil litigation. The division consists of 12 bureaus addressing numerous issues, including child welfare, revenue litigation, and any legal issue arising in a state agency. The division handles thousands of case referrals annually and is responsible for collecting hundreds of millions of dollars owed to the state.

Ensuring an Open and Honest Government

Attorney General Madigan worked with legislators and open government advocates on drafting and passing landmark legislation in 2009 to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act. The new law, which took effect Jan. 1, 2010, makes it easier to enforce the Acts, closes loopholes that made it difficult for the public



Attorney General Madigan and Southern Illinois legislators and law enforcement officials voiced their support for additional state funding to fight methamphetamine at a news conference at John A. Logan College in Carterville.

to access government records and, for the first time, establishes significant civil penalties for FOIA violations. The law also established the Public Access Counselor position in the Attorney General's office, and authorized it to issue binding opinions to resolve FOIA and OMA disputes.

Because of the office's commitment to making government more open and accessible, Attorney General documents are available in multiple languages and a Spanish telephone hotline is available.

Protecting the Public Interest

The Attorney General's Public Interest Division is charged with protecting the public's civil rights, advocating on behalf of people with disabilities, enforcing the state's antitrust laws and advocating for utility consumers. The Civil Rights Bureau enforces and strengthens civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination. The Disability Rights Bureau enforces the Americans with Disabilities Act in Illinois, and strives to ensure access to buildings and services for persons with disabilities by investigating complaints and resolving issues through mediation or litigation. The Antitrust Bureau protects Illinois consumers by ensuring that businesses and individuals do not engage in illegal, anti-competitive activities.

Through the Public Utilities Bureau, the office played a lead role in passing legislation creating payment plans for low-income utility customers. The law also expanded an energy efficiency program and instituted reforms at the Illinois Commerce Commission to strengthen the law prohibiting contact between utility representatives and regulators during pending rate hearings.

Through the Special Litigation Bureau, the office works with whistleblowers to uncover fraud in government services and unethical conduct by government officials and employees. Through the bureau, the office successfully stopped the payment of illegal kickbacks through sham leasing arrangements between MRI clinics and physician offices across the state.

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