

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

oag.dc.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, April 9, 2015

Contact: Rob Marus, Communications Director: 202.724.5646; robert.marus@dc.gov

Attorney General Racine Launches Initiative to Educate Consumers with Visits to Senior Homes in Ward 3 and Ward 6

OAG Releases Brochure to Help Consumers Protect Themselves from Common Scams

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine has launched an outreach initiative to educate the District’s consumers on ways to protect themselves, their credit and their identities against common forms of fraud. He kicked off the initiative with two visits this week to apartment complexes for seniors – the Sunrise at Connecticut Avenue in Ward 3 and Sibley Plaza in Ward 6.

“A key part of the Attorney General’s job is to protect consumers – and I want to ensure we are doing everything we can to safeguard our residents and educate them on how to avoid scams and fraud,” Attorney General Racine said. **“Seniors are often a target for fraudsters who would take advantage of them, so we are launching this initiative by reaching out first to our senior community.”**

Attorney General Racine’s Consumer Protection Initiative includes:

- More robust outreach to the District’s consumers on ways to avoid fraud;
- Bolstering the Office of the Attorney General’s (OAG) consumer-protection function with new legal and support staff to educate consumers and pursue companies who defraud the District’s residents and taxpayers;
- Better resources for the District’s consumer-protection attorneys and staff, who regularly square off against well-funded corporate attorneys; and
- A new Consumer Protection Fund for the District, which would leverage a portion of the millions of dollars that the Office of the Attorney General recovers annually for the District to fund these expanded efforts as well as other priorities.

OAG has already had a banner year in consumer protection, bringing in a \$21.5 million share in a multistate settlement with the Wall Street firm Standard & Poor’s. The Attorney General also expects to recover an additional \$60-\$90 million for the District this year in a major settlement with online travel companies.

“We already do good work with a very small staff in consumer protection – but we can do more,” Attorney General Racine said. **“I look forward to the Council of the District of Columbia considering our Fiscal Year**

2016 budget proposal, which leverages our ability to recover funds for the District to bolster our consumer-protection efforts as well as expanded efforts in other priority areas for OAG like enforcing our affordable-housing laws and improving our juvenile-justice system.”

At the Sunrise and Sibley Plaza events, the Attorney General distributed “Protect Yourself: A Consumer Protection Pamphlet.” The new resource (attached and also available in downloadable format here: <http://oag.dc.gov/page/consumer-protection-pamphlet>) briefly outlines common scams and resources available to assist the District’s consumers.

For more information on consumer protection, visit <http://oag.dc.gov/service/consumer-protection-asst>, call OAG’s Consumer Protection Hotline at 202-442-9828, or send an e-mail query to consumer.protection@dc.gov.

###