



**Karl A. Racine**  
Attorney General for the  
District of Columbia



# OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL



## ANNUAL REPORT & RESOURCE GUIDE

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## MESSAGE *from the* ATTORNEY GENERAL

Four years ago, I ran to become the District's first elected attorney general on a promise of establishing an independent Office of the Attorney General (OAG) that would use the law to serve the public interest. I pledged to vigorously protect our residents, advance the District's interests in court, and become recognized as one of our country's premier AG offices. While there is more work to be done, I believe we have lived up to that promise.

OAG has developed programs that reduce crime by getting kids out of the juvenile justice system and on the right path. We've taken legal action against slumlords and businesses that harm our residents. Over the past four years, OAG's legal work has resulted in more than \$2.5 billion in savings and benefits to the District and relief for harmed consumers. In the years ahead, we are committed to developing new strategies and initiatives to protect District residents. Our focus will include:

- **Reducing gun violence and saving lives in the District:** In response to an alarming spike in homicides, OAG launched a violence interruption pilot program – “Cure the Streets” – at two sites with some of the District's highest rates of gun violence. This program uses proven public-health strategies that treat violence like a disease that can be interrupted, treated, and stopped from spreading. OAG is working to expand this program and is looking at other strategies to combat gun violence and to stem the flow of illegal guns into the District.
- **Addressing the harmful effects of childhood trauma:** In too many District communities, youth face debilitating poverty, exposure to violence, and abuse and neglect. These experiences can induce trauma that, if left untreated, can have long-term negative effects on kids' brain development and their ability to stay on the right track. To support these youth, we will explore new strategies to increase access to mental and behavioral health services and early intervention programs that treat the symptoms of trauma.
- **Fighting elder abuse and protecting vulnerable residents:** Too many of our senior citizens are victimized by unscrupulous individuals and organizations. OAG has launched a Special Victims Unit to seek justice for seniors, children, and other vulnerable victims of abuse and violent crimes. We have used enhanced authority to protect seniors from fraudulent caregivers and scammers and will double down on these efforts in coordination with agency partners.
- **Standing up for our civil and human rights:** To better protect the civil rights of all District residents, OAG will dedicate resources to protecting residents from discrimination and other harm based on gender, race, religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, and disability.

I deeply appreciate the trust that District residents have placed in me and I am grateful for our talented, dedicated team of lawyers and professionals. I am also thankful for the strong support and consistent engagement of District residents, the Council, and the willingness of the Executive Office of the Mayor to partner on matters that help our residents.

As I embark on this second term, District residents can rest assured that OAG will not rest on its laurels; indeed, we are more committed and energized than ever to continue the important work of protecting and improving the lives of District residents. Together, we can move the District forward.

Sincerely,

Karl A. Racine



The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is the chief legal office of the District of Columbia. OAG enforces the District's laws, works to protect and defend District residents, and provides the highest level of independent legal advice and guidance to District government agencies. OAG's goal is to be the nation's most effective and respected public law office.

# TABLE *of* CONTENTS

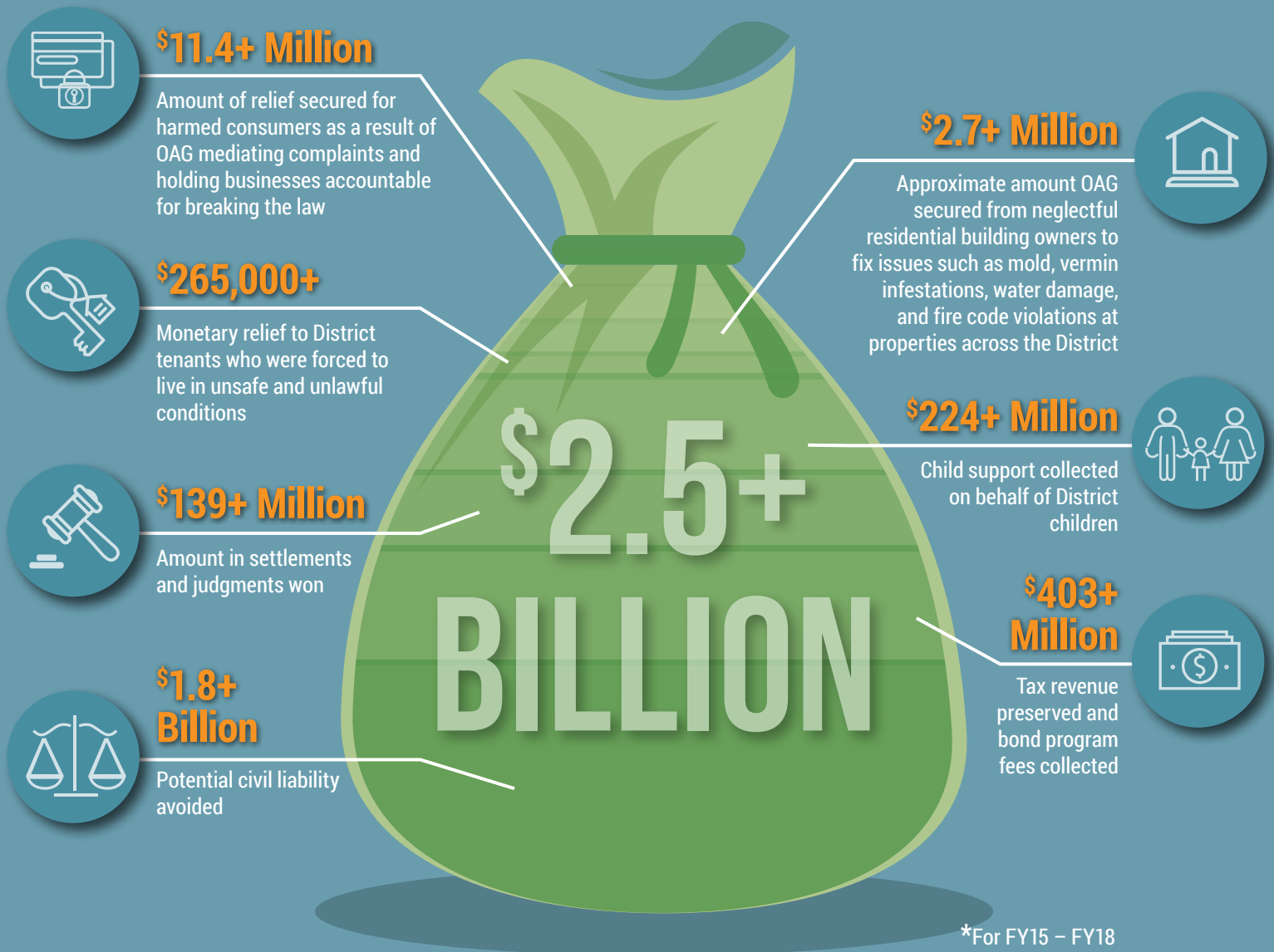
By the Numbers .....	2
Enhancing Public Safety .....	4
Setting Youth Up for Success .....	6
Safeguarding Vulnerable Residents .....	7
Preserving Affordable Housing and Improving Living Conditions .....	9
Protecting Consumers .....	10
Standing up for District Workers .....	12
Defending our Immigrant Community .....	13
Fighting Federal Overreach and Corruption .....	14
Making Government Work .....	15
Connect with OAG .....	16



# BY *the* NUMBERS

## Savings and Benefits to the District\*

**\$2.5+ Billion:** Approximate amount of savings and benefits to the District and relief for harmed consumers as a result of OAG's legal actions.



## Enhancing Public Safety and Supporting District Youth\*

**75%**

Reduction in truancy at Sousa Middle School in the first six months where OAG piloted its anti-truancy program "I Belong Here"

**23,000+**

Criminal and juvenile prosecutions filed since 2015

**2,000+**

Youth diverted to the Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) Diversion Program, nearly 75% of whom have not been re-arrested

**1,723**

Children transitioned from foster care and into a permanent home, including reunification, adoption, or guardianship

\*Since Jan. 2015



## Engaging with the Community

**1,700+**

Community meetings, events, and direct constituent interactions by OAG staff

## Making Government Work

**5,327**

Legal advice memos provided on proposed legislation, proposed rulemakings, and legal and ethics questions from District government agencies and employees\*

Percentage of cases OAG has won defending the District against civil lawsuits that seek monetary damages\*\*

**92%**

Percentage of cases OAG has won on appeal\*\*

**93%**

\*Since Jan. 2015 \*\*For FY15 – FY18

# ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY

AG Racine is focused on reducing crime and making the District safer through smart prosecution and innovative, evidence-based public safety programs. OAG's public safety work aims to stop violence before it happens and to address the root causes of crime to stop individuals from re-offending.

## Interrupting Violence: OAG's "Cure the Streets" Program

In 2018, OAG launched Cure the Streets, a violence interruption pilot program that operates in two sites in Wards 5 and 8 with some of the highest rates of gun violence. Cure the Streets uses proven public-health strategies that treat violence like a disease that can be interrupted, treated, and stopped from spreading. This approach has seen 20-60 percent reductions in shootings and killings in more than 100 cities nationwide and globally. Cure the Streets focuses on three main actions:

- **INTERRUPT:** Interrupt potentially violent conflicts by preventing retaliation and mediating simmering disputes;
- **TREAT:** Identify and treat individuals at the highest risk for conflict by providing support services and changing behavior; and
- **CHANGE:** Engage communities in changing norms around violence.

This work is carried out using credible residents with deep ties to the neighborhood called *violence interrupters* who de-escalate situations and avert violent incidents and homicides. Cure the Streets is already showing early positive results and is making a positive difference in these communities. As a result of a settlement OAG negotiated in 2018, AG Racine was able to secure \$2 million to fund Cure the Streets into 2020.

## Empowering Victims through Restorative Justice

As an alternative to prosecution, OAG launched the nation's first in-house restorative justice program in a prosecutor's office. Restorative justice uses mediation to empower victims to express how they were affected by crime and require offenders to accept responsibility and take action to repair the harm they caused. Nationwide statistics show restorative justice programs have better success than traditional prosecution at rehabilitating offenders, increasing victim satisfaction, and

lowering costs. In 2018, OAG's program was recognized with the prestigious Cafritz Award, an honor given for outstanding service by District government employees. Seen as a national leader in these efforts, OAG is working with prosecutors' offices around the country to help them establish their own restorative justice programs.



### TESTIMONIAL

*"It's a blessing seeing those yellow shirts [worn by violence interrupters] early in the morning and late at night in my neighborhood. It makes me and my family feel safe and protected."*

*— Kevina McNair, resident of Ward 5*



## Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Research shows that involvement in the criminal justice system for low-level, non-violent youth offenders can lead to worse outcomes later in life, including increasing the likelihood that they will re-offend. OAG has championed and significantly increased the number of youth it diverts to the District's Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) program, which offers wrap-around services like mental health treatment, mentoring, and individual and family therapy to young offenders. ACE has shown great success: about 75 percent of 2,000 participating youth have not been re-arrested.

## Supporting Common-Sense Gun Safety

In 2018, a reckless move by the Trump administration made it possible for anyone to easily download online instructions to produce 3D-printed firearms at home, effectively eliminating the District's ability to enforce its sensible gun laws. AG Racine sued the administration to stop dangerous criminals' access to untraceable and undetectable 3D-printed guns. A federal judge has blocked the continued publication of these online plans until the case is ultimately resolved.



### LEGISLATION

#### Keeping Dangerous Drugs off the Streets

##### *The Synthetics Abatement and Full Enforcement Drug Control Amendment Act (SAFE DC)*


In 2018, the District saw more than 3,000 overdoses and several deaths linked to synthetic drugs commonly called "K2." These synthetic drugs can induce immediate, psychotic, and deadly reactions. To protect residents from synthetics and opioid overdoses, AG Racine introduced legislation that was passed by the D.C. Council in 2018 to help law enforcement prosecute sellers and distributors of these dangerous drugs.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### Encouraging Students to "Do The Write Thing"

The massive public turnout for the "March for Our Lives" rally and numerous local youth forums about gun violence have clearly demonstrated that young people are demanding change and adults need to listen. OAG sponsored the District's participation in the national "Do The Write Thing" challenge, which gives middle-school students an opportunity to examine how violence affects them and propose solutions to break the cycles of violence in their communities. AG Racine and Councilmember Charles Allen convened a roundtable with participating students to hear their solutions, ranging from mentoring and after-school activities to anti-bullying efforts and school mediation. AG Racine is committed to elevating youth and their voices in the District's efforts to enhance public safety.



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# SETTING YOUTH UP FOR SUCCESS

As the city's chief prosecutor for juvenile offenses in the District, AG Racine advocates for evidence-based juvenile justice reforms. To make our city safer and help young people succeed, OAG is making investments in data-informed solutions that treat childhood trauma, support youth, and reduce recidivism.

## Keeping Kids in School

Kids have a better shot at a successful future when they are in the classroom learning. OAG's "I Belong Here" program, a year-long attendance competition developed to combat truancy, helped Sousa Middle School achieve the most improved attendance rate in the District, reducing its truancy rate by 75 percent. In 2018, OAG expanded this successful program to include students from all grades in the school. Sousa students compete for prizes given for best homeroom attendance, perfect attendance, and most improved attendance. OAG staff volunteer to serve as ambassadors for homerooms and lead lesson plans on topics such as responsibility and empathy. These lessons work to disrupt the negative behaviors associated with truancy rates and positively reinforce the idea that students belong in school.



### TESTIMONIAL

*"Fortunately, we have great partners like OAG to join us in encouraging students to come to school daily, on time, and prepared for success; knowing that they belong at school is half the battle."*

– Tanisha Montgomery, Sousa Middle School Administrator

## Helping Parents Behind on Child Support Get Back on Track

To help parents get back on track to supporting their children financially, OAG brought back its successful, month-long amnesty program that allows parents to catch up on back child-support payments and, in return, be eligible for certain benefits. Amnesty benefits included child support compliance letters that could help quash arrest warrants or help restore revoked driver's licenses, which can also help parents get and keep jobs. Since 2017, OAG's annual month-long amnesty program has successfully recovered more than \$126,000 in lapsed payments for District children.

## Celebrating Youth on the Right Path

The Attorney General's Right Direction Awards honor area youth who have overcome significant challenges and are making a positive difference in their communities. In 2018, one of the award recipients was Zion Kelly, twin brother of Zaire Kelly, a former Right Direction Award winner whose life was cut short due to gun violence. In the wake of this tragedy, Zion became a national advocate to end gun violence. Now approaching its 5th annual celebration, the Right Direction Awards has celebrated nearly 150 inspiring youth.



# SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

Part of promoting the public interest includes protecting those most susceptible to abuse and neglect. OAG has prioritized responding to the needs of our city's most vulnerable residents, including seniors, victims of child abuse and child sex trafficking, and more.

## Launching a Special Victims Unit

Last year, AG Racine launched OAG's Special Victims Unit (SVU) to centralize prosecution of crimes against some of the most vulnerable people in the District: sexual assault victims, young children, elders, people with disabilities, and youth at risk for sex trafficking. Best practices nationally demonstrate the need for specialized training and coordination to investigate and pursue these cases while being sensitive to victims' needs. SVU staff were trained on interview techniques when working with victims who are children, elderly, or disabled and how to connect them to support services and educational resources.

## Protecting Youth from Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where traffickers benefit by forcing victims to exchange sexual acts for anything of value. OAG works to build awareness of this terrible crime through educational resources and trainings at schools and community centers that teach residents how to identify the warning signs of trafficking and how to seek help for survivors.

OAG also partnered with local stakeholders and the D.C. Superior Court to help establish the Here Opportunities Prepare you for Excellence (HOPE) Court, which helps youth involved in the juvenile justice and neglect systems who have been victimized by sex traffickers. HOPE Court links youth with support services that are sensitive to the trauma they have experienced to help stabilize and rehabilitate them.



### LEGISLATION

#### Stopping Sexual Crimes

##### *Protection from Sexual Extortion Amendment Act*

Sextortion is a terrible form of blackmail where predators threaten to release sexually explicit photos of the victim unless their demands—monetary, sexual, or otherwise—are met. AG Racine introduced legislation that was passed by the D.C. Council in December 2018 to make sextortion a crime and give law enforcement more tools to stop traffickers and protect vulnerable children.



### RESOURCES

#### Help for Parents Collecting or Paying Child Support

If you have questions about collecting child support or need help getting back on track with your payments, call our Customer Care Center at (202) 442-9900.



### RESOURCES

#### Help for Victims of Child Sex Trafficking

Do you know the warning signs of child sex trafficking? Here are a few common red flags:

1. Running away from home
2. Not attending school
3. Using phones or credit cards that are not theirs
4. New tattoos
5. Signs of physical abuse

To get help if you or someone you know is a victim of sex trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at **1-888-373-7888**. Learn other warning signs of child sex trafficking and how you can get youth help: [oag.dc.gov/trafficking](https://oag.dc.gov/trafficking).



### RESOURCES

#### Help Child Abuse Victims

District law requires all adults to report child sex abuse. Anyone who suspects child abuse can call the District's Child and Family Services Agency central reporting line at **202-671-SAFE**. In life-threatening situations, call 911. Learn more about reporting requirements at [oag.dc.gov/PublicSafety](https://oag.dc.gov/PublicSafety).

#### LEGISLATION

### Strengthening Child Abuse Reporting Law



#### *Protecting Children Through Mandatory Reporting Amendment Act*

Child abuse can have traumatic and lifelong effects on children's behavior, emotional and mental health, and performance in school. To protect youth, AG Racine introduced legislation to strengthen the District's child abuse reporting law. The bill would enhance protections for kids, make clergy mandated reporters, stiffen penalties for not reporting, and require training for mandated reporters.

#### RESOURCES

### Help Stop Elder Abuse



One of the most common forms of elder abuse is financial exploitation, where scammers—or sometimes even close friends, caregivers, or relatives—take advantage of vulnerable seniors for personal gain.

Recognize signs of financial exploitation:

- Unusual banking or credit card activity
- Suspicious changes in wills or powers of attorney
- Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives or friends

If you suspect elder abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, call 911 or the Adult Protective Services hotline at (202) 541-3950.

#### RESOURCES

### Help for Tenants



If you believe your landlord is not making needed repairs or your health and safety are in danger, you can request an inspection from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs by calling (202) 442-4400.

If you believe your landlord is wrongly withholding a security deposit, collecting illegal late fees or attorney's fees, improperly raising your rent, or deceiving you in any way, report it to OAG's Consumer Protection Hotline at (202) 442-9828.

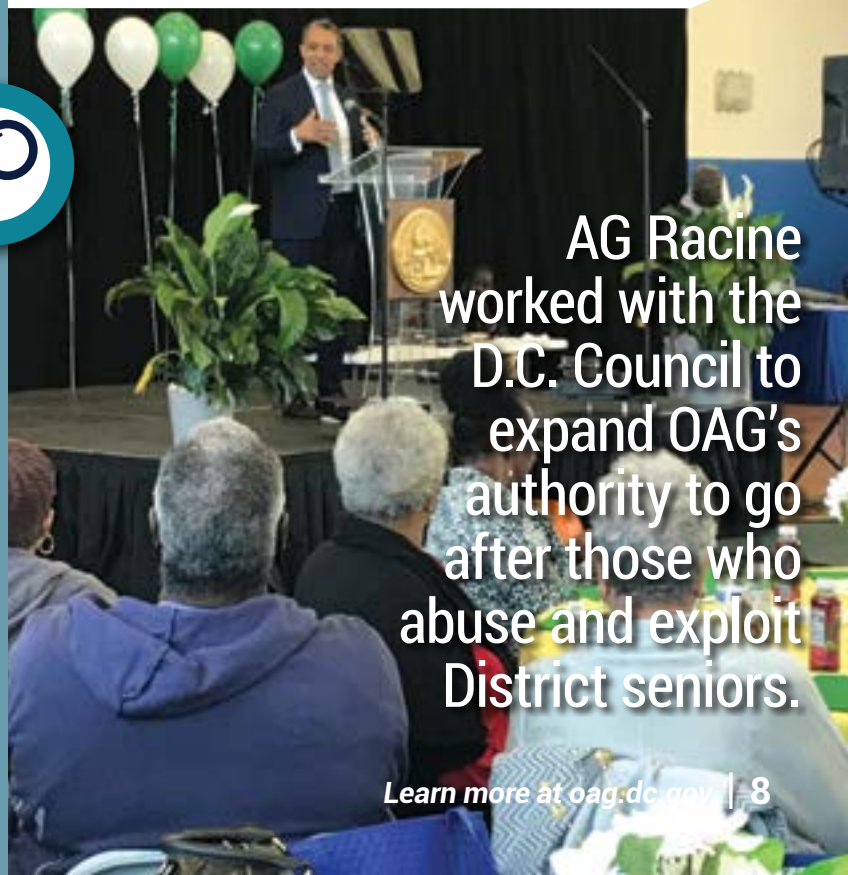
Learn about your tenant rights and how OAG can help at [oag.dc.gov/TenantRights](http://oag.dc.gov/TenantRights).

## Investigating Clergy Sexual Abuse

In light of nationwide allegations that children were sexually abused by clergy in the Catholic Church, OAG launched an online complaint portal for victims or those with knowledge of such abuse to report it to OAG: [www.ReportClergyAbusettoDCOAG.com](http://www.ReportClergyAbusettoDCOAG.com). OAG will review all allegations as part of its ongoing civil investigation into whether the Archdiocese of Washington—which is a nonprofit institution—violated the District's Nonprofit Act by potentially covering up allegations of sexual abuse of minors.

## Combating Elder Financial Exploitation

It is estimated that approximately 7,000 District seniors aged 65 and over may be experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. To better protect seniors, AG Racine worked with the D.C. Council to expand OAG's authority to go after those who abuse and exploit them. With these new tools, OAG filed a lawsuit against a home health aide who stole more than \$1,100 in rent money from her 93-year-old client. In this case, OAG won a judgment to recover \$25,000 in civil penalties and an injunction to prevent the aide from working with the elderly and other vulnerable adults in the future. OAG has several investigations underway and will take action against those who exploit District seniors. OAG also has an elder abuse attorney based in the U.S. Attorney's Office to expand the District's ability to prosecute abuse and exploitation of seniors.



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D.C. Council to  
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District seniors.**

# PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS

One of the most pressing issues facing District residents is the shortage of affordable housing. To respond to this growing problem, OAG is using all the legal tools in its toolbox to preserve existing affordable housing and protect tenants.

## Ensuring Safe and Habitable Housing

OAG is committed to improving housing conditions in buildings across the city where landlords force tenants to live in unsafe and unlawful conditions. To date, OAG has secured more than \$2.7 million from neglectful building owners to fix issues such as mold, vermin infestations, water damage, and fire code violations at properties across the District. OAG has also secured more than \$265,000 of monetary relief for residents who were forced to live in these unsafe conditions. In one court settlement, OAG forced a notorious slumlord, Sanford Capital, to sell all of its properties in the District and not return to the city's subsidized housing market for at least seven years.

## Stopping Unlawful Rentals that Reduce Affordable Housing Supply

In recent years, residential building managers and landlords across the city have started operating blocks of apartments for short-term rentals—a practice that is generally prohibited under District law. Long-term residents have complained that these hotel-like rentals attract disruptive visitors and create security concerns. This practice also reduces the supply of housing available for rent, worsening the District's shortage of affordable housing.

In one case, an OAG investigation revealed the owner of a 21-unit apartment building in Columbia Heights had converted the entire rent-controlled building into short-term transient rentals in violation of the Rental Housing Act. In OAG's settlement, the building owner was required to pay \$100,000 in penalties and costs to the District and stop offering illegal short-term rentals at any property in the District.

## Ensuring Property Owners Keep Tenants Safe

Last year, OAG filed lawsuits against several neglectful building owners in Deanwood, Petworth, Eckington, and Anacostia who refused to take basic steps to improve building security and

allowed their apartment buildings and storefronts to become havens for dangerous drug and gun activity. In a series of settlements, several building owners in Ward 7 were required to hire full-time security, install protective fencing, and add new security cameras and high-powered lighting. AG Racine took legal action to improve safety for tenants and surrounding residents because everyone should feel safe in their homes.

## Fighting Housing Discrimination Against Low-Income Renters

District law bans source-of-income discrimination in housing. AG Racine filed a lawsuit against a local landlord for refusing to rent apartments to individuals in the District who use housing vouchers. With nearly 17 percent of District residents living below the poverty line and 10,500 depending on housing vouchers, these illegal business practices are a hurdle for those seeking affordable housing.

### TESTIMONIAL



*"[The Office of the Attorney General] worked closely with our Tenants Association to help us enforce our rights and work towards achieving justice for the Alabama Avenue/13th Street Tenants Coalition. Together we exposed one of the most notorious slumlords in Washington, D.C. and made sure they were held accountable for their wrongful actions. Our fight is not over but we know with strong allies like the OAG we will win."*

*— Ruth Barnwell, President of the Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenants Coalition*



# PROTECTING CONSUMERS

OAG's Office of Consumer Protection works to ensure that businesses follow the law and treat District consumers fairly. Through this work, OAG mediates disputes, educates residents about their rights, and takes legal actions against individuals and companies who defraud District residents and break District laws.

## Bringing Relief for Consumers Harmed by Illegal Debt Collection Practices

AG Racine secured a settlement last year against Midland LLC for illegal debt collection practices that provides \$550,000 in debt relief to more than 400 District residents. Midland allegedly used illegal tactics like robo-signing, which signs court documents without verifying debt information. AG Racine also secured a combined \$2 million in debt relief for students defrauded by Career Education Corp. (CEC), a for-profit college company. CEC misled students about its programs and inflated job-placement rates, leaving them saddled with debt and no way to pay it off.



### TESTIMONIAL

*"I discovered scammers had drained my payroll earnings, and I was having a hard time working with the business to get my money back. I filed a complaint with OAG and they were able to work with the business to make sure my money was refunded."*

*– Elsa, a District consumer helped by OAG's mediation process*

## Holding Washington Sports Clubs Accountable for Deceiving Consumers

AG Racine sued Washington Sports Clubs (WSC) for misleading District consumers about cancellation policies, billing practices, and fees. Despite a 2016 OAG settlement requiring WSC to stop similar illegal conduct, a new OAG investigation uncovered that WSC continued to mislead consumers to convince them to sign up for gym memberships, failed to disclose all sign-up fees and its membership auto-renew provision, and charged consumers after they cancelled their memberships. If you were billed for membership charges after canceling your WSC membership, please call OAG's Consumer Protection Hotline at (202) 442-9828.

## Securing Justice for Families Scammed by Funeral Homes

OAG secured a settlement with Austin Royster Funeral Home and its Chief Operating Officer, Jamelle Royster, requiring them to pay \$280,000 in relief to more than 60 eligible consumers who paid for funeral services they never received or who suffered other financial losses at the hands of this business. In 2017, OAG sued the funeral home, alleging it misled seniors, disabled individuals, and grieving families; overcharged for funeral services; charged for services it did not provide; and did business without the proper licenses. Families experiencing the loss of a loved one and navigating the funeral process can learn about their rights with our free "Shopping for Funeral Services" factsheet at [oag.dc.gov/ConsumerProtection](https://oag.dc.gov/ConsumerProtection).

## Protecting Consumers' Online Data

In one of the first lawsuits against Facebook brought by a state attorney general, AG Racine sued the company for failing to protect the privacy of more than 340,000 District residents—nearly half of the District's population—and millions of its other users. OAG's investigation revealed that Facebook's lax oversight and confusing privacy settings put users at risk of manipulation, allowing third-party applications to collect personal data without users' permission. OAG is seeking consumer relief, civil penalties, and costs.

Additionally, OAG secured two high-profile multistate settlements with Uber, a ride-sharing company, and Neiman Marcus, a high-end department store, for data breaches that compromised consumers' personal information. The settlements total more than \$4.1 million and ensure these companies will take steps to protect their customers' data and encourage other companies to do the same.

## Stopping Cheating Home Contractors

As part of OAG's work to protect District consumers from cheating contractors, AG Racine filed a lawsuit against Xquisite Basements & Kitchens and its owner Newton Gaynor for making shoddy home repairs and failing to complete jobs. OAG alleges the company preyed on seniors, opened lines of credit and charged consumers without their permission, and failed to pay its employees. An OAG investigation found that Xquisite did not complete projects and, in some instances, left consumers with no lights or water in their homes. In the lawsuit, OAG seeks to stop the illegal behavior and secure monetary relief for harmed consumers, as well as penalties.



### RESOURCES

#### Help for Consumers

If you are the victim of a scam or believe a business has deceived you, submit a consumer complaint with OAG by:

- Calling OAG's Consumer Hotline at **(202) 442-9828**
- Emailing [consumer.protection@dc.gov](mailto:consumer.protection@dc.gov)
- Filing an online complaint at [oag.dc.gov/ConsumerProtection](https://oag.dc.gov/ConsumerProtection)



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### How Residents Help Inform Our Work

This year, OAG's Community Engagement Team received several complaints that Tow Junkies LLC, a towing business, was unlawfully parking its tow trucks on residential streets in Southeast D.C. Our team passed this information off to attorneys who investigated and discovered that Tow Junkies was operating without a license. OAG secured a court order to stop the company from doing business in the District, halt parking on residential streets until it obtains the proper licenses, and to pay a \$5,000 fine. This is one example of how community feedback helps inform OAG's work to help residents.

**OAG's Office of Consumer Protection holds many educational events, including seminars on how to manage student loans. For more information, visit [oag.dc.gov/StudentLoans](https://oag.dc.gov/StudentLoans).**



OAG is holding abusive employers accountable for wage theft, working to recover wages for harmed workers, and educating them about their rights.



## STANDING UP FOR DISTRICT WORKERS

A 2017 study by the Economic Policy Institute found that low-wage workers lose an average of \$64 per week—or more than \$3,300 per year—when employers refuse to pay employees what they're rightfully owed. OAG is standing up for workers by holding abusive employers accountable for wage theft, working to recover wages for workers who have been harmed, and educating workers about their rights.

### Holding Abusive Employers Accountable

In May 2018, OAG secured more than \$20,000 in back pay to workers and fines to the District from the owners of two local KFC fast-food franchises who underpaid employees. AG Racine also sued a national electrical contractor, Power Design, Inc., for cheating more than 500 District workers out of their hard-earned wages and benefits. The lawsuit alleges that the company used a payroll scheme called “worker misclassification” and did not pay workers minimum wage, overtime, or sick leave, and failed to pay District payroll taxes.

#### TESTIMONIAL



*“The owner of the staffing agency, when confronted with the workers’ [OAG wage log books], agreed to pay the workers their back wages. This is because the workers could document the hours that they actually worked and not what the [contractor] reported they had worked...This is an example of how AG Racine’s innovative policies have had a positive impact on workers’ lives.”*

– Victoria Leonard, Baltimore Washington Laborers’ District Council



# DEFENDING OUR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

Immigrants represent approximately 100,000 of the District's 700,000 residents. AG Racine is working to protect our immigrant community through legal actions, public education, and community engagement.

## Demanding Answers About Local Immigration Enforcement

In 2018, news outlets reported that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials detained District residents in predominantly Latino neighborhoods in Columbia Heights and suggested the agency engaged in racial profiling. In response, AG Racine demanded answers from ICE about who was detained, the reasons for the detentions, and information about the agency's immigration enforcement policies. When ICE failed to respond, OAG filed a lawsuit to get answers about the immigration crackdowns. OAG also issued information about immigrants' rights in the District at [oag.dc.gov/immigrantrights](http://oag.dc.gov/immigrantrights).

## Defending Longtime Residents at Risk of Deportation

AG Racine led a coalition of attorneys general in opposing the Trump administration's termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for longtime residents from Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Sudan. If these residents lose authorization to live and work in the United States, state and local economies will suffer, families will be torn apart, and these residents will lose access to healthcare. A federal court issued a preliminary injunction blocking the Trump administration's move while the case is being appealed to a higher court. AG Racine is committed to protecting these longtime District residents who make valuable contributions to our communities.

## Welcoming Refugees and Keeping Families Together

It's our responsibility to embrace refugees fleeing their countries because of violence and persecution—not to break up their families at the border. OAG filed a lawsuit to stop the Trump administration's cruel immigration policy that separated children from their parents who were crossing the southern border. Separately, AG Racine also led a 19-state coalition opposing the administration's attempt to deny asylum to victims of domestic and gang violence, which a federal court ultimately blocked.



### RESOURCES

#### Help for Workers

If you believe your employer has not paid you what you are owed, call the District's Department of Employment Services at (202) 671-1880.

If you believe your employer routinely fails to pay workers what they are owed, provide sick leave, or follow other D.C. labor laws, call OAG's Housing and Community Justice Section at (202) 442-9854.

Learn about your right to fair wages, overtime pay, and sick leave at [oag.dc.gov/WageRights](http://oag.dc.gov/WageRights).



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### Immigrant Community Forum

In November 2018, more than 300 residents packed an auditorium at the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School for OAG's multilingual forum about issues important to the District's immigrant community. The presentation informed residents about issues including how to report wage theft, what steps to take if landlords fail to make critical home repairs, and what to do if ICE knocks on your door. To watch a recording of the presentation, visit our Videos section on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/dcoag](https://Facebook.com/dcoag).



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### Pro Bono Immigration Training

Navigating the immigration process can be a difficult task, especially if you don't have the resources to afford a lawyer. To increase immigrants' access to legal services and ensure the justice system works for everyone, OAG hosted a training session that helped more than 80 local lawyers understand immigration proceedings and how they can provide pro bono legal support to District residents. More trainings are planned for 2019.

# FIGHTING FEDERAL OVERREACH AND CORRUPTION

As the District's chief legal officer, AG Racine promotes the interest of the District and its residents. When Congress fails to serve as an appropriate check and balance on the Trump administration, OAG steps up to fill the void to protect District residents.

## Enforcing the U.S. Constitution

In 2017, AG Racine and Maryland AG Brian Frosh sued President Trump for violating the Constitution's Emoluments Clauses, our nation's original anti-corruption laws. The Emoluments Clauses prohibit the president from accepting money or benefits from foreign or domestic governments. Unlike previous presidents, President Trump has refused to separate himself from his businesses and continues to accept money from foreign and domestic governments through transactions at the Trump International Hotel here in the District. In a historic ruling in July 2018, a federal court judge agreed that the president is prohibited from accepting almost anything of value—including gifts, payments, and benefits—from foreign or domestic governments. OAG continues fighting to stop the president from violating the Constitution and using his office for profit.

## Defending Reproductive Rights

AG Racine joined a multistate lawsuit against the Trump administration to stop a rule that could result in funding cuts to healthcare for low-income women and families. Trump's attack on critical family planning programs will threaten healthcare access for thousands in the District and block women from getting complete information about healthcare options.

## Fighting for District Representation

Participating in the Census is critically important to the allocation of federal funds and representation for the District. The Census is also required by the Constitution. AG Racine filed suit against a Trump administration plan to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, which could deter participation by many of our residents. This case is pending before the Supreme Court.



# MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK

OAG represents the city in court and provides advice and guidance to District agencies navigating legal issues. OAG also enforces District law to ensure that the people and companies doing business in D.C. operate with the highest integrity.

## Protecting the Tax Dollars that Support D.C. Public School Children

It is illegal in the District for out-of-state parents to falsify District residency to avoid paying non-resident tuition and send their kids to District schools for free. AG Racine has filed lawsuits against out-of-state parents for alleged residency fraud, seeking a total of more than \$1.9 million in repayments for unpaid tuition, damages, and penalties. Over the past two years, OAG has devoted additional resources, attorneys, and investigators to fight residency fraud and will continue to bring these actions to deter other parents from cheating District taxpayers and depriving District students of educational opportunities.

## Stopping Medicaid Fraud

Cheating the Medicaid system not only harms District taxpayers, but also Medicaid patients who need services the most. In 2018, AG Racine sued three personal care aides for falsifying timesheets and bilking the District's Medicaid program out of money. OAG is seeking \$350,000 in damages and penalties for stealing from a program that is designed to help the disabled and those with conditions that render them homebound. Anyone attempting to cheat District taxpayers, seniors, and vulnerable residents will be held accountable.

## Mediating Claims in a Quick, Fair, and Informal Way

District taxpayers benefit when lawsuits against the city are resolved quickly and involved parties can avoid the costs of going to trial. OAG launched the Community Dispute Resolution Program to resolve lawsuits through an informal mediation process. Under the program, any individual who has filed a lawsuit against the District seeking \$50,000 or less for property damage or personal injury may bring a claim for informal resolution. To learn more about this Community Dispute Resolution Program, visit [oag.dc.gov](http://oag.dc.gov).

## Ensuring the Best Deals for the District

It's good news for District residents when merger deals provide maximum service benefits for consumers and promote the public interest. In 2018, AG Racine helped negotiate an agreement that will clear the way for AltaGas, a Canadian energy company, to acquire WGL Holdings (which owns Washington Gas) and will provide tens of millions of dollars of benefits to District ratepayers and residents. The agreement includes a \$6 million commitment to the District to support initiatives like OAG's Cure the Streets violence interruption program and workforce development programs to help train District residents for good-paying jobs. This agreement now provides real benefits to District residents, transforming a merger deal that previously was not in the public interest.



### LEGISLATION

## Ending Pay-to-Play Politics

### *Campaign Finance Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act*

District residents deserve to trust that their government is working for them and not special interests. In January 2017, AG Racine introduced campaign finance legislation designed to end pay-to-play politics; make political donations transparent; and create a "bright line" between candidates and political action committees. AG Racine's legislation was incorporated into an omnibus bill that passed the D.C. Council in 2018. This is a significant step toward leveling the playing field in District elections.



# CONNECT *with* OAG



## Talk with our Community Engagement Team

We want to hear from you! Share your concerns and feedback with our Community Engagement Team and learn how to access OAG services by calling (202) 741-0765 or emailing [OAGCommunity@dc.gov](mailto:OAGCommunity@dc.gov).



## Report Elder Abuse

Do you suspect someone is the victim of elder abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation? Contact OAG by calling (202) 727-3807 or emailing [ElderAbuse@dc.gov](mailto:ElderAbuse@dc.gov).



## Learn Your Rights as a Tenant

Have a neglectful or abusive landlord and want to know your rights? Learn about your tenant rights and how OAG can help at [oag.dc.gov/tenantrights](http://oag.dc.gov/tenantrights).



## Learn Your Rights as a Worker

Have questions about your wage rights or think you are the victim of wage theft? Learn about your right to fair wages, overtime pay, and sick and safe leave at [oag.dc.gov/wagerights](http://oag.dc.gov/wagerights).



## Protect Yourself Against Scams

Want to learn warning signs for common scams and how to protect yourself? Visit our Consumer Protection Library at [oag.dc.gov/consumerprotection](http://oag.dc.gov/consumerprotection).



## Work with OAG

Want to work with a committed team of professionals who use the law to defend and protect District residents and promote the public interest? Browse OAG job vacancies at [oag.dc.gov/careers](http://oag.dc.gov/careers).



## Access Child Support Resources

Have questions about collecting child support or need help getting back on track to paying child support? Contact our Customer Care Team by calling (202) 442-9900 or emailing [childsupport@dc.gov](mailto:childsupport@dc.gov).



## Find us on Social Media and Sign Up for our Newsletter

Want to know the latest OAG news? Connect with us:



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@dcoag



@AGKarlRacine



[oag.dc.gov](mailto:oag.dc.gov)

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**Learn more at [OAG.DC.GOV](https://oag.dc.gov)**

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