

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2016

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DURING NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK, AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES TOP CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

March 6-12 is National Consumer Protection Week

(MONTGOMERY) – During National Consumer Protection Week, Attorney General Luther Strange announced the top consumer complaints received in his Consumer Interest Division during 2015. He also urged Alabamians to notify his office when they experience or suspect consumer fraud.

“As we focus our attention this week on consumer protection, I am warning consumers to be watchful each and every day,” said Attorney General Strange. “Scammers never go away, they just change tactics and we must not let down our guard. The best way to avoid being a victim, or to minimize the risk, is to be vigilant against fraud in its many forms. Last year my office handled more than 3,000 complaints from consumers, and provided education and assistance that prevented a number of other scams from being successful.”

The Attorney General’s Consumer Interest Division received 3,160 consumer complaints during 2015 with the top five as follows:

1. Loans/Mortgages
2. Debt Collection
3. Home Repair
4. Auto (Used)
5. Auto Repair

“Our goal is to stop consumer fraud before it happens, and our staff of consumer specialists stand ready to help,” said Attorney General Strange. The Attorney General’s Office maintains a consumer protection hotline to take reports of fraudulent activity and to provide information and tools to equip individuals to protect themselves. “I hope that consumers will take advantage of the resources offered by our consumer protection office, and that together we can fight the fraud that occurs and stop it wherever possible.”

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The Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection **cannot serve as an individual's private attorney or provide consumers with legal advice.** However, in many instances, the Attorney General's Office has been successful in mediating complaints to the mutual satisfaction and benefit of the consumer and the business.

If circumstances warrant, the Attorney General may initiate legal action, either civil or criminal, to represent the interests of the State of Alabama and to enforce the various laws designed to protect consumers from con artists and unscrupulous practices by businesses.

Alabamians may report suspected consumer fraud by calling Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline at **1-800-392-5658** or online at <http://www.ago.state.al.us/> and click on "Consumer Protection." To file an online complaint, use the link: <http://www.ago.state.al.us/Page-Consumer-Protection-File-a-Complaint>.