



**For Immediate Release**

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## **MADIGAN FILES SUIT CHALLENGING PHONE BILL CRAMMING**

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against a California company and its owner alleging that they have bilked small businesses in Illinois and across the country for thousands of dollars through a practice known as “cramming.” Cramming involves adding charges to a consumer’s telephone bill that the consumer never wanted or ordered. This is the second complaint Madigan has filed in the past four weeks against corporations suspected of cramming charges onto the telephone bills of Illinois small businesses.

Madigan’s complaint alleges that Inc21.com Corporation, doing business as GlobalYP.net, and Roy Lin, the company’s president, place telemarketing solicitation calls to small businesses during which they claim the businesses are receiving a free trial of their services, without any obligation. However, in reality, if a small business does not call and cancel within 15 days, the defendants add monthly charges of \$34.99 to the business’ local phone bills under the “Miscellaneous Charges and Credits” section of the bill. The charges are commonly listed as “Inc 21 Comm Gold Business Plan” or “Global YP Gold Business Plan.”

Small business owners, and at least one church and one library, have reported charges on their local phone bill despite flatly refusing to receive any service or information from defendants. In some instances the business owners have denied knowledge of any solicitations by defendants’ telemarketers. All of the consumers who have complained to Madigan’s Office deny authorizing defendants’ services or agreeing to pay for these services.

“We allege that these defendants are defrauding small business consumers by adding unauthorized charges to their bills,” Madigan said.

“All telephone customers should review their phone bills monthly to make sure they authorized all the charges. If they find charges they did not approve, they should dispute them with their phone company and ask that the charges be removed from the bill. They can file a consumer complaint with my office,” Madigan added.

A review of records by Madigan’s office has revealed that over the past two years, the defendants have charged at least 4,682 small businesses for a total of over \$369,000. So far, Madigan’s office has received 16 consumer complaints

about the defendants from small businesses in Adams, Brown, Champaign, Cook, DeKalb, Logan, Macon, Madison, Morgan, and Winnebago Counties.

However, Madigan said the 16 complaints likely represent only a small fraction of the small businesses that are being billed for charges they did not authorize. She urged small businesses who believe they have fallen victim to this scam to call her office at the number listed below to file a complaint with her Consumer Fraud Bureau or to download a consumer complaint form from her office's website.

Madigan's suit, filed September 12, 2006 in Sangamon County Circuit Court, charges Inc21.com Corporation and Roy Lin with violating Illinois' Consumer Fraud Act. The suit seeks a permanent injunction barring the defendants from doing business in Illinois, restitution for consumers, civil penalties of \$50,000 for violating the Consumer Fraud Act, and an additional \$50,000 for each violation committed with the intent to defraud.

Assistant Attorney General Philip Heimlich is handling the case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau in Springfield.

To file a complaint with Madigan's office, consumers can download a consumer complaint form from the Attorney General's website at [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov) or can call the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at the following number:

**1-800-243-0618**  
**TTY 1-877-844-5461**

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