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MADIGAN HERALDS NEWLY STRENGTHENED FALSE CLAIMS ACT***Amended Act Will Help Attorney General Recover Taxpayer Dollars from Vendors that Defraud the State***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the efforts of the General Assembly and the Governor in enacting the new Illinois False Claims Act, a key weapon in the State's fight against fraud and waste in public contracting. The bill amends the current law, providing the State with improved investigatory abilities and allowing the State to recover the high costs associated with investigating and litigating these complex cases.

"Through this newly amended law, we will have a stronger weapon to protect taxpayer dollars from businesses that engage in fraud when dealing with State and local governments," Attorney General Madigan said. "These increased enforcement tools are especially meaningful as our state struggles financially during these tough economic times."

Madigan drafted House Bill 5951 and worked closely with its chief sponsors, State Representative Will Burns and State Senators Jeff Schoenberg and Mike Noland, to ensure its passage. The General Assembly unanimously passed the bill and Governor Quinn signed it yesterday. The new law takes effect immediately.

"With enactment of this legislation, businesses involved with state and local governments should receive the message that the state of Illinois does not tolerate fraudulent activity," said Representative Burns.

Attorney General Madigan has recovered millions of taxpayer dollars through litigation using the previous version of the false claims law. The new amendments will improve enforcement and allow the Attorney General's office to recover additional taxpayer dollars lost through instances of fraud, waste and abuse in government programs.

"I have investigated claims of fraud, waste and abuse in government programs and taken legal action to recover taxpayer dollars whenever possible," Madigan said. "The new provisions in this law will help to deter fraud and make the recovery of taxpayer dollars easier."

The Illinois False Claims Act also contains provisions that protect whistleblowers who report fraud and reward individuals who assist the State in suits filed to recover taxpayer dollars.

"The people of Illinois deserve an open, accountable government," said Senator Noland. "By protecting whistleblowers, we defend the people against corruption and safeguard taxpayer dollars. This bill is part of our continuing effort to reform government in Illinois."

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