



September 21, 2010

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES BACKPAGE.COM TO REMOVE ADULT SERVICES SECTION

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today sent a letter to backpage.com, an Internet company, urging it to immediately eliminate the adult services advertisements from its site to prevent human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children and women. Madigan and 20 other state attorneys general requested the action after backpage.com failed to prevent ads for prostitution and other illegal activity from appearing on its site.

Madigan and other state attorneys general opened an investigation into backpage in 2009. The company responded with attempts to address the concerns, including implementing fees to place ads in the adult services section. Those efforts failed, however, with prostitution ads simply being posted on free sections of the site.

“Sex trafficking of children and women is a sickeningly far-too-real problem in Illinois and across the country,” said Attorney General Madigan. “Web sites are welcome to make money selling cars and merchandise, but we will not tolerate the sale of human beings and the exploitation of children for sex.”

These efforts are part of the Attorney General’s ongoing push to protect the children and women who fall victim to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Craigslist and backpage, two of the country’s largest online classified ad sites, were projected to generate over \$62 million from adult services ads in 2010, according to a study by the Advanced Interactive Media Group. Last month Madigan and other state attorneys general successfully lead the effort against craigslist to remove its adult services section.

Madigan also works with local and national law enforcement organizations to address Internet exploitation issues. Madigan’s office, with a grant from the Department of Justice, runs the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force, which investigates child exploitation crimes and trains law enforcement. Since 2006, Madigan’s office has been involved in over 300 arrests of sexual predators and provided Internet safety training and education to more than 128,000 parents, teachers and students and more than 10,000 law enforcement professionals.

Madigan joined attorneys general from Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia in sending the letter to backpage.com today.

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STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
A Communication From the Chief Legal Officers
Of the Following States and Territories:

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Ohio * Rhode Island * South Carolina * Tennessee * Texas * Virginia

September 21, 2010

Sent via facsimile

Samuel Fifer
Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal, LLP
233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 7800
Chicago, IL 60606-6404

RE: backpage.com

Dear Mr. Fifer:

Thank you for your recent letter notifying us of additional changes backpage has implemented in order to respond to our concerns that blatant prostitution ads are rampant on the site. Although we appreciate these efforts and the cooperation the site has demonstrated since we began our investigation in 2009, more needs to be done.

We are writing to request that you immediately take down the adult services portion of backpage.

We believe that ads for prostitution-- including ads trafficking children-- are rampant on the site and that the volume of these ads will grow in light of craigslist's recent decision to eliminate the adult services section of its site. In our view, it is time for the company to follow craigslist's lead and take immediate action to end the misery of the women and children who may be exploited and victimized by these ads. Because backpage cannot, or will not, adequately screen these ads, it should stop accepting them altogether.

As you indicated in your recent letter to us, you found that once you began charging for ads in the adult services section of the site, prostitution began migrating into certain sections of the personals section, so you began to charge to posts ads in that section as well. We urge you to take additional efforts, such as manual review of each ad in these sections of the personals -- and others if it becomes necessary -- before ads are posted.

We recognize that backpage may lose the considerable revenue generated by the adult services ads. Still, no amount of money can justify the scourge of illegal prostitution, and the

misery of the women and children who will continue to be victimized, in the marketplace provided by backpage.

We sincerely hope backpage, like craigslist, will finally hear the voices of the victims, women and children, who plead with it to make this important change. We too, call on backpage to listen, to care, and respond now by shutting down the adult services section of its website. It is the right thing to do to protect innocent women and children.

Very truly yours,



Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General of Connecticut



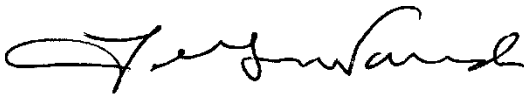
Chris Koster
Attorney General of Missouri



Dustin McDaniel
Attorney General of Arkansas



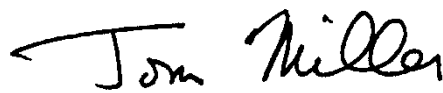
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Attorney General of Delaware



Lawrence G. Wasden
Attorney General of Idaho



Lisa Madigan
Attorney General of Illinois



Tom Miller
Attorney General of Iowa



Steve Six
Attorney General of Kansas



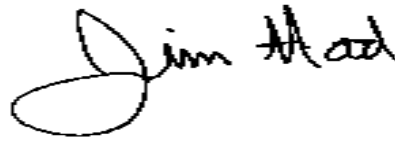
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Attorney General of Montana



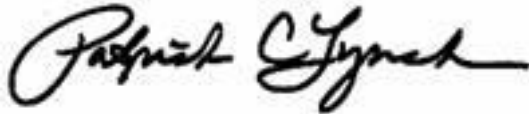
Catherine Cortez Masto
Attorney General of Nevada



Michael A. Delaney
Attorney General of New Hampshire



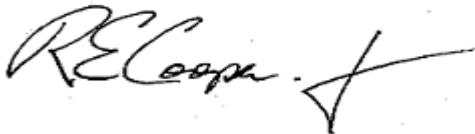
Richard Cordray
Attorney General of Ohio



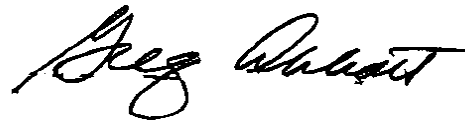
Patrick C. Lynch
Attorney General of Rhode Island



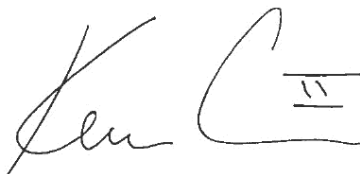
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Attorney General of South Carolina



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Attorney General of Tennessee



Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas



Kenneth T. Cuccinelli, II
Attorney General of Virginia