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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN FILES SUIT AGAINST FRAUDULENT CHICAGO AREA AIR DUCT CLEANING FIRM***Madigan Seeks to Shut Down Company, Impose Fines and Refund Homeowners***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against a Chicago area air duct and vent cleaning company for soliciting work it failed to complete and for repeatedly misleading consumers, particularly senior citizens, to purchase services they didn't need.

Madigan's lawsuit was filed in Cook County Circuit Court against Moshe Kesem, of Schaumburg, and his two business entities, Warranty USA Inc. and Air Duct Cleaning Pros, both based in Schaumburg. The suit alleges that since November 2009 Kesem has fraudulently charged consumers for expensive mitigation of mold and mildew damage that did not actually exist in their homes.

"This company targeted vulnerable seniors and deceived homeowners into purchasing services they didn't need," Attorney General Madigan said. "Consumers should know illegitimate contractors are always scamming people out of their hard-earned money. So homeowners need to investigate contractors before signing contracts and beginning projects. Never get pressured to rush into a contract."

The Attorney General alleges Kesem showed consumers fake pictures of extensive mold or mildew damage to their homes in order to charge them for clean-up and other services. The suit alleges homeowners who contracted work through Kesem at advertised discounts later were charged for additional services they did not request or approve. Madigan also alleges Kesem regularly tacked on fraudulent services that were not necessary to address fictional problems—sometimes adding more than \$1,000 to the bill.

The defendant was known to target seniors for services they did not need and charge extra costs for work his company did not do. Some consumers objected to the high costs, while others paid the defendant to avoid his threats demanding payment. One consumer reported spending \$2,494 so that Kesem and his workers would leave her home.

Consumers in Cook, Lake, DuPage, Will and Kane counties reported to Madigan's office charges totaling more than \$17,350 due to fraudulent contracts with the defendant.

Madigan's lawsuit alleges violations of the state's Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act and the Home Repair and Remodeling Act and asks the court to prohibit the defendant from working in the home repair trade in Illinois. The suit seeks to cancel Kesem's pending contracts and obtain restitution for affected consumers. The lawsuit also seeks to impose on Kesem a civil penalty of \$50,000, penalties of \$50,000 for each violation found to be committed with the intent to defraud, and additional penalties of \$10,000 for each violation found to be committed against a person 65 years or older.

Consumers can find tips for finding a reputable contractor by visiting Madigan's website, www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov, or by calling the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline:

Chicago 1-800-386-5438
Springfield 1-800-243-0618
Carbondale 1-800-243-0607

Assistant Attorney General Junko Minami is handling the case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

