

[Press Releases](#)**March 23, 2011****ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES SPRINGFIELD TRAVEL AGENT OVER VACATION TRIP SCAM**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed suit against a Springfield woman for soliciting thousands of dollars from Sangamon County consumers for trips that were abruptly canceled and not refunded. Madigan's suit seeks to bar the business owner from the travel business and obtain restitution for consumers.

Madigan filed the lawsuit today in Sangamon County Circuit Court against Shawn Meiseman, who sold travel services through her Freedom Tours travel agency. The lawsuit alleges consumers paid Meiseman more than \$4,600 dollars for bus trips that were canceled with few days' notice and never refunded.

"This defendant took advantage of unsuspecting consumers, depriving them of the vacations they had planned on as well as their hard-earned money," Attorney General Madigan said. "This lawsuit should serve as a warning for consumers to remain extremely cautious when scheduling travel plans. Make sure you check out the organization's standing with my office and the Better Business Bureau, and receive the terms of the trip in writing before you pay."

Madigan alleges Meiseman advertised two bus trips last year destined for Cape Cod, the Mall of America in Minnesota and other destinations, and required interested consumers to pay upfront for the trips, charging \$799 and \$219, respectively. The lawsuit alleges Meiseman collected \$4,641 from consumers in advance of the October 2010 trips and canceled days before they were to depart. Meiseman's agency has since shut down and failed to refund affected consumers, in violation of the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices and Travel Promotion Consumer Protection Acts.

The suit seeks to bar the defendant from selling travel services in Illinois, cancel any pending contracts between Meiseman and consumers and seeks restitution for consumers with unresolved complaints in the scheme. The lawsuit also seeks to impose on the defendant a civil penalty of \$50,000, additional penalties of \$50,000 for each violation found to be committed with the intent to defraud, as well as \$10,000 per violation found to be committed against a person 65 years or older.

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

-30-

[Return to March 2011 Press Releases](#)

