



July 13, 2011

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**MADIGAN CALLS FOR BAN ON PHONE BILL "CRAMMING"**

Washington — Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan testified today before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee, calling for a nationwide ban on phone bill "cramming." Madigan said the practice of cramming has exploited unknowing consumers, whose phone numbers are used to charge hundreds of dollars in bogus services they never asked for or wanted.

"Phone bill cramming is a scheme to use a consumer's phone number like a credit card," Attorney General Madigan said. "Whether over the phone or on the Internet, consumers are solicited for free trials, coupons or prizes, and they're never clearly told they're purchasing a service, that they'll be billed for on their phone bill or that giving out their phone number will amount to giving out their credit card information."

The Attorney General said in recent years consumers have increasingly reported being scammed online. Internet users report simply submitting their phone number, among other information, for online prize drawings, surveys or free recipes. Weeks or months later, consumers find charges on their phone bill for services they did not authorize or use.

"My office has filed 30 lawsuits on behalf of consumers who discovered unauthorized charges on their phone bills," Madigan said. "Cramming is a fraud epidemic affecting consumers in every state. We must enact legislation to ban third-party businesses from cramming charges on phone bills."

For more information on how to protect against phone bill cramming or to report being scammed, contact Attorney General Madigan's Consumer Fraud Hotlines:

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

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