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### MADIGAN SUES CHICAGO MAN FOR IMMIGRATION FRAUD

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed suit against a Chicago man for cheating consumers out of at least \$10,000 for help with their immigration applications that he never provided.

Madigan filed the lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court alleging Vytautas Lekarauskas fraudulently charged immigrant consumers upfront fees ranging from \$40 to more than \$1,000 each to assist with services and document preparation.

“Too often I see scam artists target immigrants with the promise of helping them navigate a very complicated legal process,” Attorney General Madigan said. “The scammers take large sums of money upfront but then disappear without ever providing help on immigration applications.”

The lawsuit alleges Lekarauskas deceptively marketed and represented his website, [www.USAIMmigrationsupport.com](http://www.USAIMmigrationsupport.com), as an official government site. The website features a logo that closely mimics a federal seal next to the title “United States Immigration Organization,” and attempts to make consumers believe it is an official government site where they can obtain passports, visa and citizenship applications.

Lekarauskas’ website encourages consumers to apply for these federal documents, which are available for free through legitimate government sources, and charges substantial fees to simply apply – \$149 for passport applications, \$450 for green card applications, \$680 for citizenship applications, for example. Consumers never received the documents for which they applied, according to the complaint.

Madigan said Lekarauskas misled consumers in Illinois and across the country to believe they were hiring an attorney to assist with document preparation, application filing and other services through that site and his United States Immigration Organization Inc. In fact, Madigan said, Lekarauskas is not a licensed attorney.

The Attorney General received 11 complaints against Lekarauskas from consumers who reported losing at least \$10,000. The Better Business Bureau has also received 52 consumer complaints against the defendant.

Madigan is asking the court to ban Lekarauskas from the business of immigration service in Illinois and cease operating his website or any variation of it under a different domain name or URL. The lawsuit also asks the court to void pending consumer contracts and order the defendant to pay restitution to consumers. Madigan also asked the court to impose civil penalties on Lekarauskas of \$50,000 for violating the Consumer Fraud Act and an additional \$50,000 for each violation committed with the intent to defraud.

Attorney General Madigan offered consumers the following tips to learn how to identify potential immigration scams. By state law, Madigan said immigration service providers should:

- Provide a written contract in English and in an applicant’s native language;
- Provide a three-day right to cancel a contract;
- Return all documents upon demand; and
- Register with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office.

Madigan urged consumers who believe they may have been the victim of a scam to contact her Consumer Fraud Hotline, (800) 386-5438, and (866) 310-8398 for Spanish speakers.

Assistant Attorney General Adam Sokol is handling this case for Madigan’s Consumer Fraud Bureau.

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