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## MADIGAN CALLS ON SMART PHONE MANUFACTURERS TO CREATE 'KILL SWITCH' TO DETER THEFT

### ***Attorney General Joins National Coalition to Address Spike in Cell Phone Thefts, Urges Manufacturers and Wireless Carriers to Act***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today called on smart phone manufacturers to develop a so-called “kill switch” to render the devices inoperable if they are stolen. This move by the manufacturers would make stolen smart phones worthless on the secondary market, and deter thefts, or “apple picking” as the crime is commonly known.

Madigan’s office will join New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón and a number of other state Attorneys General, District Attorneys, major city police chiefs, state and city comptrollers, public safety activists and consumer advocates from around the country at a summit today with four major smart phone manufacturers: Apple, Google/Motorola, Microsoft and Samsung.

Madigan noted that smart phone thefts have increased in recent years, in some cases turning extremely violent and deadly. According to the Federal Communications Commission, cell phone thefts comprise between 30 and 40 percent of all robberies nationwide. In 2012, 1.6 million Americans were victimized in incidents related to cell phone thefts, including 23-year-old Megan Boken, a Wheaton, Ill. native, who was shot and killed in St. Louis by two men attempting a robbery.

In Chicago in recent years, there has been a rise of more than 30 percent in mobile phone thefts at public transit locations. In fact, just last month, Chicago police arrested a man who was responsible for at least four smart phone thefts on the Chicago Transit Authority lines, in some cases at gunpoint. Tragically, in 2011, a 17-year-old boy stole a smart phone at the Fullerton el station in Chicago and upon fleeing the station pushed 68-year-old Sally Katona-King down the stairs. Katona-King later died from the injuries sustained in the fall. The perpetrator recently was sentenced to 32 years in prison for murder and robbery.

“The growing number of violent crimes and senseless deaths connected to smart phone thefts demonstrate just how serious a problem this is in our communities,” Madigan said. “We must stop these crimes, and it is imperative that manufacturers and wireless carriers are part of the solution.”

The national coalition of law enforcement agencies, public safety and consumer advocates will analyze patterns, causes and trends behind the growing crimes and work with device manufacturers to urge them to develop a “kill switch” as a standard feature of their products. That feature would allow a manufacturer to remotely disable a phone if it is stolen, so the device cannot be reactivated.

Madigan also offered the following tips for smart phone users to consider in keeping their devices and personal information secure:

- Consider adding password protection to your phone;
- Choose an app to place on your phone to remove your personal information if your phone is lost or stolen so thieves don’t have access to your pictures, contact information, email messages and other personal information;
- Keep your smart phone close to you and be aware of your surroundings in public places such as public transportation, stores and sidewalks;
- If you have information on your phone that you would not want to lose if it is stolen, such as pictures, back the information up by saving it to a computer, memory card, or cloud service; and
- Store your smart phone in a secure place when you aren’t using it.

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