



June 1, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH FRAUDULENT CHARITABLE TELEMARETERS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a settlement with Safety Publications Inc., a professional fundraiser and for-profit telemarketer, and its owners over allegations that the company violated the charitable Solicitation Act and prior consent decrees with Madigan’s office. The Solicitation Act dictates the laws governing charitable solicitations and fundraising activities in Illinois.

The consent decree entered by Cook County Circuit Judge Thomas R. Allen permanently bans Safety Publications and one of its owners Arthur Olivera from charitable fundraising in Illinois and requires Safety Publications to dissolve its operation with the Illinois Secretary of State’s Office. Its other owner, Adam Herdman, is banned for three years from charitable fundraising in Illinois. The settlement also includes a penalty of nearly \$160,000 against the defendants.

“The owners of Safety Publications are serial con artists who have shown complete disregard for the law over and over again,” Madigan said. “Today’s order should put an end to their serial fraud in Illinois.”

Today’s settlement resolves a three-count complaint Madigan filed in January 2016 against Safety Publications for: 1) misleading the donating public as to who was making the solicitation and how the donations would be used; 2) acting on behalf of a charity without maintaining the required registration and failing to disclose or account for fundraising activities; and 3) violating the consent decrees Safety Publications and its owners had previously entered into with Madigan’s office.

Madigan has pursued Herdman and Olivera multiple times for violations of the Solicitation Act. Her allegations stemmed from Safety Publication’s work soliciting donations for VietNow National Headquarters (VietNow), a Rockford, Ill.-based charity that pledges to help veterans overcome joblessness and post-traumatic stress disorder. VietNow hired Safety Publications to raise money, but records show only a fraction of the contributions Safety Publications collected actually went to pay for charitable programs. When making solicitation calls to the public, Safety Publications failed to disclose that it was a paid fundraiser. Safety Publications also failed to disclose or account for its paid fundraising activities on behalf of VNH in annual financial reports filed with Madigan’s office. Records also show that Safety Publications was not registered with Madigan’s office for a portion of the time that it was soliciting donations. In addition, Olivera did not disclose a previous felony conviction on registration documents filed with Madigan’s office.

Bureau Chief Therese Harris, Assistant Bureau Chief Barry Goldberg and Assistant Attorney General Pasquale Esposito handled the settlement for Madigan’s Charitable Trust Bureau.

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