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## MADIGAN CHARGES SIX IN GAS STATION IDENTITY THEFT RING

### *Attorney General Madigan & Secret Service Announce Charges Against Florida Defendants for Gas Station Credit & Debit Card Skimming Scheme*

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced charges against six Florida residents for skimming information off credit and debit cards used at gas stations across the Chicago area.

Madigan alleged the defendants stole credit and debit card information using skimming devices at gas stations around Chicago and across the country. Madigan alleged the defendants stole information from gas station customers in Cook, DuPage and Lake counties to make more than \$210,000 of fraudulent purchases in the Chicago area.

Madigan's office worked with the Secret Service to charge each of the following defendants in Cook County Circuit Court with identity theft, financial institution fraud, theft by deception, conspiracy to commit a financial crime, computer fraud and mail fraud:

- Caridad Chacon, 45, of Tampa;
- Jordan Chacon, 23, of Tampa;
- William Hernandez, 24, of Tampa;
- Jose Molina, 26, of Tampa;
- Claudia Chung Prieto, 23, of Tampa; and
- Katerine Ramirez, 25, of Miami.

Skimming devices can be installed at gas station pumps within seconds and are not visible to a customer using it. When customers pay at the pump, the skimmers collect all of the information stored in the credit or debit card's magnet strip. Once thieves retrieve the skimmer, they download the data and can create new credit cards using the stolen information. Madigan alleged that the defendants in this case used the new cards to make retail purchases and buy gift cards, making the fraud more difficult to trace.

"The defendants orchestrated a scheme to install skimming devices at gas station pumps around Chicago and across the country to steal credit card and debit card information," Madigan said. "This scheme is nearly impossible to detect by a customer, so it is critically important that people regularly monitor their bank and credit card accounts and report any unauthorized charges."

According to Madigan, the defendants have used similar skimming devices in states around the country, including Michigan and Georgia. In 2015, an American Express fraud investigator detected suspicious activity on multiple accounts, and all of the cards in question were traced to the same gas station in Glencoe, Ill. Madigan's office investigated the case with the Secret Service.

"Gas pump skimming investigations remain a priority for the U.S. Secret Service" said Special Agent in Charge John A. Koleno of the U.S. Secret Service Chicago Field Office. "This case highlights our outstanding relationship with the Illinois Attorney General's Office and we will continue to work with our state and local partners to disrupt organized criminal groups who defraud financial institutions and innocent citizens".

Anyone with information regarding gas pump skimming or who has been the victim of a financial crime is encouraged to contact the U. S. Secret Service, Chicago Field Office at 312-353-5431.

The public is reminded that the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Deputy Bureau Chief Nicole Sutcliffe is handling the case for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau.

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