

**ATTORNEY GENERAL CUOMO SHUTS DOWN SEVEN  
COMPANIES FOR PROVIDING FRAUDULENT LEGAL  
SERVICES TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

*Files Two Additional Lawsuits against Companies for Defrauding  
Thousands of Immigrants*

*Latest Stages of Cuomo's Ongoing Immigration Fraud Investigation*

[\[En Espanol\]](#)

NEW YORK, NY (August 17, 2010) - Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the latest actions in his ongoing effort to combat scams that target New York's immigrant communities. As part of his broad investigation into immigration fraud, Cuomo has shut down seven companies and sued two other organizations for providing fraudulent legal services to immigrants.

The following seven companies and their owners have been permanently barred from operating any immigration services businesses and must collectively pay \$370,000 in damages to the State of New York: (1) Centro Santa Ana, Inc. and Ana Lucia Baquero, in Queens; (2) Margo's Immigration Services and Margarita Davidov a/k/a Margo Davidov, in Queens; (3) Miguel Fittipaldi, J.D., Ltd. and Miguel Fittipaldi, in Manhattan; (4) Arthur C. Hurwitz, in Manhattan; (5) Oficina Legal Para Hispanos, P.C. and Geoffrey S. Stewart, in Manhattan; (6) Asilos and Camilo Perdomo, in Queens; and (7) Mision Hispana, Inc. and Mayra Liz, in Queens.

The Attorney General began an investigation and issued subpoenas to these companies after receiving information that they were engaged in fraudulent and illegal business practices. The illegal conduct included, among other things, misrepresenting their authorization to submit documents on behalf of immigrants to the government and giving legal advice to immigrants. Further, some of these companies involved attorneys who aided others in the unauthorized practice of the law and simply lent their name to provide legitimacy to the business. Collectively, these companies abused hundreds of immigrants.

"These companies took money from immigrants by promising to provide services that they could not deliver," said Attorney General Cuomo. "The fraudulent practices of these companies caused innocent people to face problems with their immigration status, even deportation. My office will continue to go after companies and individuals that defraud and abuse New York's immigrant communities."

As a result of the settlements with the Attorney General's office, these companies are also required to notify all former and current clients in writing that they are no longer providing any immigration-related services and must submit quarterly reports to the Attorney General of any complaints from the public. Complainants may be eligible for restitution for using these fraudulent businesses.

The Attorney General's office will coordinate with several New York legal associations to help handle the companies' existing cases and to protect innocent victims.

**LAWSUITS AGAINST OTHER FRAUDULENT IMMIGRATION SERVICES  
COMPANIES**

In a separate action, Cuomo filed two lawsuits against other organizations that are providing fraudulent legal services to immigrants.

The first lawsuit is against four companies that have been illegally providing unauthorized legal services to immigrants. The lawsuits were filed today in New York State Supreme Court against: Inmigración Hoy, Inmigración Hoy News Today, Forensic Immigration Law, and Inmigración Accounting Service, which are all controlled by Edwin Rivera in the Bronx. These companies all offered legal counsel to immigrants without being licensed attorneys or having the proper accreditation. In thousands of cases across New York City and Long Island, these companies gave unlicensed legal advice and unlawfully filed immigration petitions with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services on behalf of immigrants and their families, jeopardizing their efforts to achieve legal status. Further, the companies failed to provide consumers with written contracts in both the consumer's native language and English, as required by law.

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Today the Attorney General also filed a lawsuit against Thomas N. Toscano, a lawyer in Queens who worked with non-lawyers to illegally provide legal services to immigrants. Toscano failed to supervise his non-attorney employees and allowed them to operate a law office out of their home where non-attorney employees met with clients on immigration cases. Toscano advertised as an immigration attorney but had cases handled by his non-attorney employees, who often provided legal advice. Clients never got an opportunity to discuss their cases with an actual attorney admitted to practice law, and many immigration applications were later denied by immigration authorities.

The lawsuits seek to permanently bar the companies and their owners from providing immigration-related services in the future and seek penalties for these actions.

Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition, said, "New York is celebrated throughout the world as a place of opportunity for all, and any company that lines its pockets by defrauding immigrants has no place in our city or our state. We applaud Attorney General Cuomo for his continued work to shut down fraudulent companies and stand up for New York's immigrant communities."

Jason Abrams, Chair of the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law for the American Immigration Lawyers Association in New York, said, "Immigrants and their families can be subject to irreparable harm from unscrupulous individuals and fraudulent companies. The cost of this abuse is not just measured in dollars, but in torn families, stolen opportunities, and heartache. We are proud that Attorney General Cuomo is leading the way to shut down scams that prey on immigrants and we look forward to continuing to work with him to protect these vulnerable New Yorkers."

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The illegal actions of fraudulent immigration services organizations have disastrous consequences on immigrant communities. In addition to being forced to pay substantial fees, victims and their families are put at risk of suffering permanent damage as a result of receiving incorrect immigration-related legal advice. Individuals who followed the advice of fraudulent organizations have been subject to deportation due to inadequate or negligent legal representation.

Under state and federal law, only lawyers or accredited representatives can represent individuals before immigration authorities. Under New York State law, it is unlawful to mislead or defraud any person in immigration-related services. New York law also requires anyone providing immigration services to comply with advertising, signage, and surety requirements, and to give consumers written contracts in both the consumer's native language and English that detail their services and cancellation policy. Further, it is illegal for not-for-profit immigrant service providers to charge excessive fees for services; the services must be provided free of charge or at a very nominal rate.

Today's action is the latest stage of Attorney General Cuomo's ongoing efforts to protect immigrants and their families from being targeted by fraudulent immigration services in New York. Other actions include:

In July 2010, the Attorney General obtained a judgment of over \$6.25 million against Immigration Community Service Corporation and its owner Vincent I. Gonzalez of Manhattan for engaging in the unauthorized practice of the law and defrauding thousands of immigrants who used their services for filing immigration applications with the federal government.

In June 2010, the Attorney General sued several organizations and their principals - Chay Pa Lou Community Center, Inc.; Delegee Tax Consultant, Inc.; Jean Michel; Rincher's Bookstore a/k/a Rincher Associates, Inc. a/k/a Rincher Associates & Bookstore a/k/a Rincher's Multi Services; Haitian American Entrepreneur's Group, LLC a/k/a Delrin Associates, LLC; Deslande Rincher a/k/a Dislande Rincher; and Sharlene M. Seixas-Rincher - for defrauding Haitian nationals of thousands of dollars by illegally providing immigration services they were not authorized to provide and by misrepresenting a new law that granted special status to certain immigrants. These organizations targeted Haitian nationals who were recently affected by the devastating January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The cases are currently pending in the New York Supreme Court.

In April 2010, the Attorney General shut down American Immigrants Federation for defrauding immigrants with false promises of citizenship, engaging in the unauthorized practice of law, and illegally charging exorbitant

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fees for services. The organization, its president Estela Figueredo, and its affiliates had to shut down all of their operations and pay \$1.2 million for restitution to victims.

In March 2010, the Attorney General obtained a \$3 million court judgment against a Queens County individual, Miriam Hernandez, for defrauding immigrants by claiming that she could help them gain citizenship.

In January 2010, the Attorney General sued and obtained a temporary restraining order against International Immigrants Foundation, International Professional Association, and their President Edward Juarez for engaging in fraud and the unauthorized practice of law. The case is currently pending in the New York State Supreme Court.

In August 2009, the Attorney General shut down three companies - Immigration Solutions and Systems, Inc. and its owner Mary DiSerio of Manhattan; Alisandra Multiservices, Inc. and its owner Sandra A. Peguero of Brentwood, Long Island; and All Immigration Services and its owners Ruth A. Shalom and Isaac Shalom of Great Neck, Long Island - for providing unauthorized and fraudulent legal services to immigrant communities and required them to pay full restitution to all victims. The companies were required to pay more than \$100,000 in penalties and were permanently prohibited from operating immigration services businesses.

In August 2009, the Attorney General sued Professional Solutions Consultants (d/b/a Reliable Clerical Services and Reliable Immigration Services) and its owner Clover A. Perez, located in Queens, for providing unauthorized and fraudulent legal services to immigrant communities and is seeking injunctive relief, restitution, and penalties. The case is currently pending in the New York Supreme Court.

The cases are being handled by Assistant Attorneys General Sandra Abeles and Vilda Vera Mayuga and Assistant Deputy Counselor Elizabeth De León, with the assistance of Assistant Attorney General-in-Charge of the Harlem Regional Office Guy Mitchell and Investigators John McManus and Angel Laporte, under the supervision of Special Deputy Attorney General for Civil Rights Alphonso B. David and Chief Counsel for Civil Rights Spencer Freedman.

If you have been a victim of immigration assistance fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Immigration Services Fraud Unit Hotline at (866) 390-2992 or visit [www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov).

Attachment:

[AOD - Margarita Davidov](#)

[AOD - Camilo Perdomo](#)

[AOD - Arthur C. Hurwitz](#)

[AOD - Mayra Liz and Mision Hispana, Inc.](#)

[AOD - Miguel Fittipaldi](#)

[AOD - Oficina Legal Para Hispanos, P.C. and Geoffrey S. Stewart.pdf](#)

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