

State of California • Department of Justice  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Brown Sues 8 Individuals and 6 Businesses Operating Scams Targeting California Small Businesses**

San Diego - Continuing his fight against "rip-off artists" operating in California, Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. filed suit today against eight individuals and six businesses that operated scams targeting small business owners. The lawsuits, filed today in San Diego Superior Court, seek to recover more than \$3 million.

Schedule note: Brown is in San Diego this morning and is available to speak about these cases at approximately 10:30 -- at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel - downtown (Indigo A Room, 1 Park Blvd in San Diego 92101.

"These cases will send a powerful signal that small business owners must be on the alert," Brown said. "These rip-off artists sent official-looking documents through the mail for the sole purpose of duping small business owners into paying them money - for no value in return."

The three cases are separate scams, each following a similar theme. The defendants mailed to small businesses solicitations that appeared to be government documents featuring an official-looking seal, an official-sounding name, citations to the Corporations Code and a "reply by" date. The forms claimed that the business was in danger of losing its corporate or limited liability status if payment was not made within a short period of time.

In the first case, Anthony Williams operated Compliance Annual Minutes Board that mailed to California businesses official-looking forms demanding that the recipient complete the form and return it with payment of an "Annual Fee" of \$150 or risk loss of corporate status. Williams claimed that in exchange for payment, he would provide corporate minutes. Instead, he prepared generic fictitious minutes for the business owners who paid his fee.

The next case involved George Alan Miller, Rebecca Miller, Arghisti Keshishyan and Kristina Keshishyan who together operated two corporations and one limited liability company: Annual Review Board, Inc., Business Filings Division and Corpfilers.com, LLC. Miller and his co-conspirators mailed solicitations to California limited liability companies and corporations, demanding that the recipients complete the form and return it with payment or risk penalties, fines and suspension. The payment amounts varied from \$195 to \$239, but all mailers were designed to be official-looking government documents that misled the recipients into sending money.

In the third case, Maria Jones operated Corporate Filings Division and Corporate Compliance Filings, Inc., which mailed official-looking forms entitled "Annual Minutes Disclosure Statement" to California businesses, implying that the recipient business was required to complete the form and return it with payment of an "Annual Fee" of \$175 or risk loss of corporate status. In exchange for payment, Jones agreed to provide corporate minutes. The information she solicited, however, was inadequate for legitimate corporate minutes, and she instead provided fictitious minutes.

All defendants are accused of violating:

- Business and Professions Code section 17533.6 (Deceptive Solicitation Statute)
- Civil Code section 1716 (Phony Billing Statute)
- Business and Professions Code section 17500 (False Advertising Statute)
- Unfair business practices within the meaning of Business and Professions Code section 17200.

In all three cases, the Attorney General's Office seeks civil penalties, injunction and other equitable remedies and costs.

Since 2004, the Attorney General's Office has received more than 5,000 complaints against a growing number of individuals who mailed solicitations made to look like governmental forms to small businesses in California. Today's announcement adds to the five cases the office has already successfully handled since these scams were brought to the office's attention.

The three complaints and the mailers are attached.

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