



2023

Year in Review



Office of the New York State Attorney General
Letitia James

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Letitia James
New York State Attorney General

Dear Friends,

While two cases dominated most of the headlines this year, my office stayed busy doing other important work on behalf of everyday New Yorkers. We fought for your safety, your rights, and your health.

We brought a landmark lawsuit against PepsiCo for enabling pollution with its wanton use of single-use plastics, and for lying to consumers about its sustainability efforts. We won back pay for Lyft and Uber drivers. And we continued to secure millions of dollars from the manufacturers and distributors of opioids that spurred a deadly epidemic.

We had a big focus on public safety. Last year, my office held the first-ever statewide gun buyback to take thousands of dangerous, unwanted guns off the streets. We sued an irresponsible company whose gun lock was used by a white supremacist to kill 10 Black people in Buffalo and stopped national distributors from selling undetectable ghost gun parts in New York. Our organized crime task force also broke up five gun and drug trafficking rings operating throughout state – bringing illegal and dangerous guns and drugs onto our streets and into our communities. We took on this generation's corporate behemoths: big tech. We sued Google and Amazon for taking unfair advantage of customers and small businesses. We sued Meta for knowingly designing features harmful to youth. We introduced two bills to prevent social-media companies from feeding children addictive, destructive content and to limit their ability to capture young people's personal data.

We fought for the basic right of every New Yorker to have access to basic, decent, and affordable health care. We sued a major nursing home operator for neglecting residents and committing financial fraud. We helped thousands of New Yorkers recover \$1.5 million through our Health Care Helpline, assisting individuals navigating the complicated web of insurance and health care payments. We issued a groundbreaking report on the difficulties of finding behavioral health care providers. And in the face of regressive, draconian measures being passed around the country, we fought for access to medication abortion and the right for every New Yorker to access abortion care.

Throughout the year, my office helped keep the people of New York safe, healthy, and well. I look forward to facing 2024, and all the new challenges and promises it brings, with you.

Thank you,


Letitia James

Funds Recovered for New York State



In 2023, Attorney General James collected over

\$1.48 billion

on behalf of New York state.

Including:



Holding Powerful Organizations Accountable



Attorney General James fights to ensure that everyone, regardless of their popularity or political views, receives equal treatment under the law. She has always refused to stand by while powerful, influential, or wealthy individuals and organizations break laws to enrich themselves or victimize others. In 2023, she challenged such colossal organizations as Meta, PepsiCo, the NFL, the NCAA, Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, Lyft, and Uber for their practices that harmed the people of New York. She did not hesitate to face Donald Trump, and the Trump Organization in court for blatant, long-term fraud.

Winning justice for New Yorkers from a former U.S. president

Attorney General James won an unprecedented legal victory against Donald Trump and his organization for years of financial fraud. In February 2024, a New York court ruled that Trump, his organizations, and his associates must pay the state \$464.6 million in fines and interest. This ruling by Judge Arthur F. Engoron supported Attorney General James' case to hold Mr. Trump accountable for his blatant, self-serving financial misdeeds.

This historic court victory concludes Attorney General James' 2022 lawsuit against Trump, his organization, and the senior management of the Trump Organization. Judge Engoron, presiding over a Manhattan court, found that the Trumps had illegally inflated and deflated the values of their properties to benefit themselves while cheating lenders, insurers, and taxpayers.



Suing PepsiCo for plastic pollution in the Buffalo River

Attorney General James' office found that PepsiCo's beverage and snack food packaging was the leading contributor of waste along the Buffalo River. In November, Attorney General James filed a groundbreaking lawsuit against the corporation for harming the public and the environment with its single-use plastic packaging, and misleading consumers about its use of virgin plastics and its efforts to fight pollution through recycling. Attorney General James seeks to end PepsiCo's harmful practices and to hold the company accountable for its damage to New Yorkers and their natural resources.



Recovering stolen pay for cheated Lyft and Uber drivers

An investigation by Attorney General James found that for years, popular rideshare companies Uber and Lyft illegally deducted taxes and fees from drivers' pay. They also failed to provide the drivers with sick pay and other important benefits mandated by state law. In October, Attorney General James secured \$328 million to directly reimburse drivers who were cheated out of their rightful earnings (\$290 million for Uber, and \$38 million for Lyft).

The OAG's investigation found that the companies had deducted sales taxes and Black Car Fund fees from drivers' earnings from 2014 to 2017 (Uber) and from 2015 to 2017 (Lyft). In addition to repaying the cheated drivers, both companies will also begin to provide important benefits, such as paid sick leave, a guaranteed minimum hourly rate, transparent information about earnings, eligibility to appeal deactivation decisions, and chat support in multiple languages. This is the largest wage-theft settlement the New York Attorney General's office has ever won.



Making Big Pharma pay for its part in the opioid epidemic

opioid crisis in recent years. She has helped recover more than \$50 billion in opioid agreements nationally, including more than \$2.6 billion for New York.

In June, Attorney General James secured robust injunctive relief and more than \$548 million for New York from CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart for their role in the opioid epidemic. These settlements were the latest of Attorney General James' victories against big players in the

Defending young lives from Juul's dangers

In her ongoing battle against the vaping crisis engulfing the nation's youth, Attorney General James continues to crack down on companies that try to profit from young New Yorkers' health. E-cigarettes contain nicotine and other harmful chemicals, that are addictive, and endanger adolescents' developing brains. Yet their makers deliberately market them to young people to make money. In April, Attorney General James co-led the largest-ever multistate agreement with Juul Labs Inc. (Juul) and its former directors and executives for their alleged role in contributing to the nationwide youth-vaping epidemic.

Juul will pay \$462 million to six states and the District of Columbia. New York will receive \$112.7 million, and the proceeds will support programs across the state to combat underage vaping and tobacco use. This agreement places the most stringent restrictions on Juul's marketing, sales, and distribution practices to protect and prevent minors from underage vaping. The agreement requires Juul to perform retail compliance checks, limit the amount of online and retail purchases, prohibit the marketing of products targeting youth, amongst other restrictions.



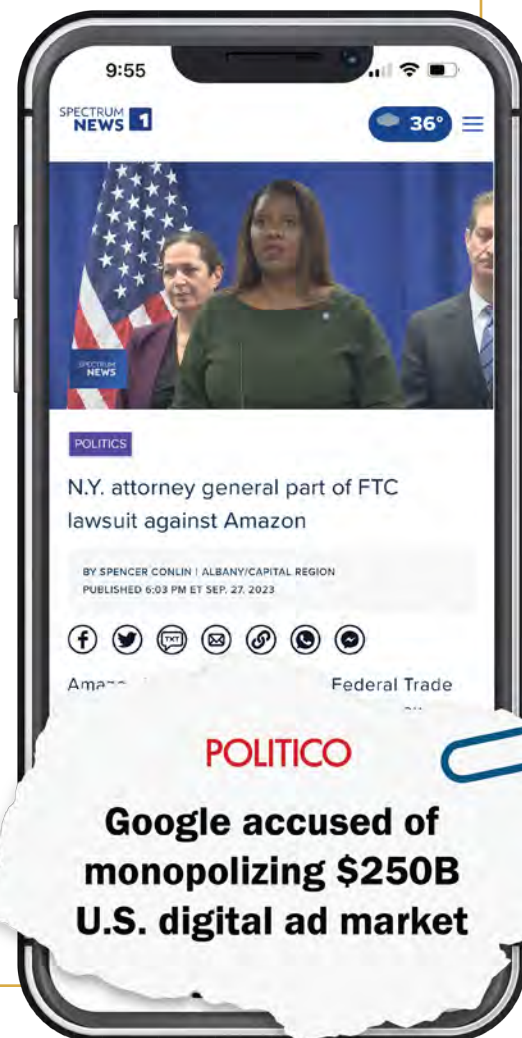
Reining in Big Tech's anticompetitive abuses of power

Fiercely protecting consumers' right to a free and competitive marketplace, Attorney General James relentlessly pursues powerful organizations that use their size to gain unfair advantages.

Attorney General James led a multistate coalition in September, joining the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in a landmark lawsuit against Amazon for its unfair, monopolistic practices. The online retail giant has been using its power and anticompetitive strategies to force vendors to sell on its platform under its terms. Unable to compete in a free marketplace, the vendors are forced to pay Amazon's exorbitant fees. Consumers, unable to buy the vendors' goods elsewhere for less, are hurt by higher prices controlled by Amazon.

Attorney General James also held Google to account for its monopolistic practices multiple times this year. In January, she sued Google for monopolizing markets in digital display advertising. She joined a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), charging Google with engaging in a 15-year, organized campaign to influence digital-display advertising technology (adtech) at all levels. The company has used its power to reduce competition and innovation, harming website publishers, advertisers, and consumers. The lawsuit seeks to end Google's anticompetitive practices and to force it to sell off various adtech tools. The intent is to restore competition in display advertising markets and end Google's unfair advantage.

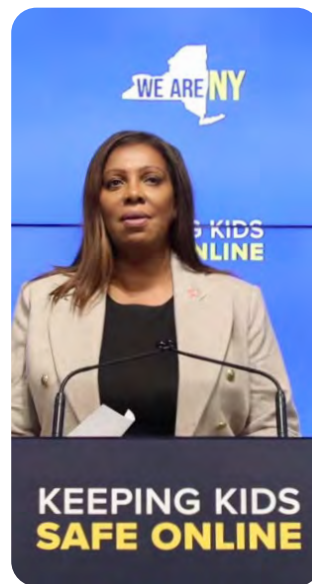
Attorney General James and a bipartisan coalition of 53 attorneys general announced a proposed settlement with Google in December on a different matter. The agreement, which settles a 2021 lawsuit, requires Google to make substantial changes in how apps and in-app content are sold on Android devices. Google will pay about \$630 million to compensate consumers, and \$70 million more to the states. The lawsuit claimed that Google illegally maintained its monopoly over mobile-app distribution and in-app payment processing for Android devices. In addition, the suit alleged that Google used its monopoly power to charge consumers as much as 30 percent for purchasing apps and making in-app purchases.



Holding Meta accountable for its effects on mental health

Most children and teens go online every day, and many spend hours consuming dangerous, addictive social media. Increasing use of social media is having a devastating effect on young New Yorkers' mental health, including skyrocketing rates of depression,

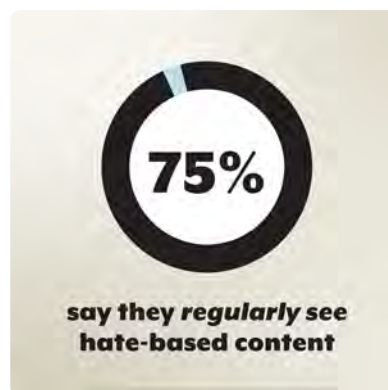
anxiety, and thoughts of self-harm. Social-media platforms collect users' personal data and viewing patterns, which they use to customize the content that they feed to the users to keep them online as long as possible. In addition, because extreme content tends to increase user engagement, young viewers often receive feeds that become increasingly radical the longer they stay online.



In October, Attorney General James and a coalition of 32 attorneys general sued Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, for harming young people's mental health. The lawsuit alleges that Meta intentionally designed its social media services to be addictive to children and teenagers on social-media sites, leading to excessive engagement and contributing to the mental-health crisis.

Attorney General James unveiled two groundbreaking legislative bills in October, which aimed at keeping young people safe online. Developed with Governor Kathy Hochul and state legislators, the bills prevent companies from collecting and sharing young people's personal data without consent and limiting the addictive features of social media.

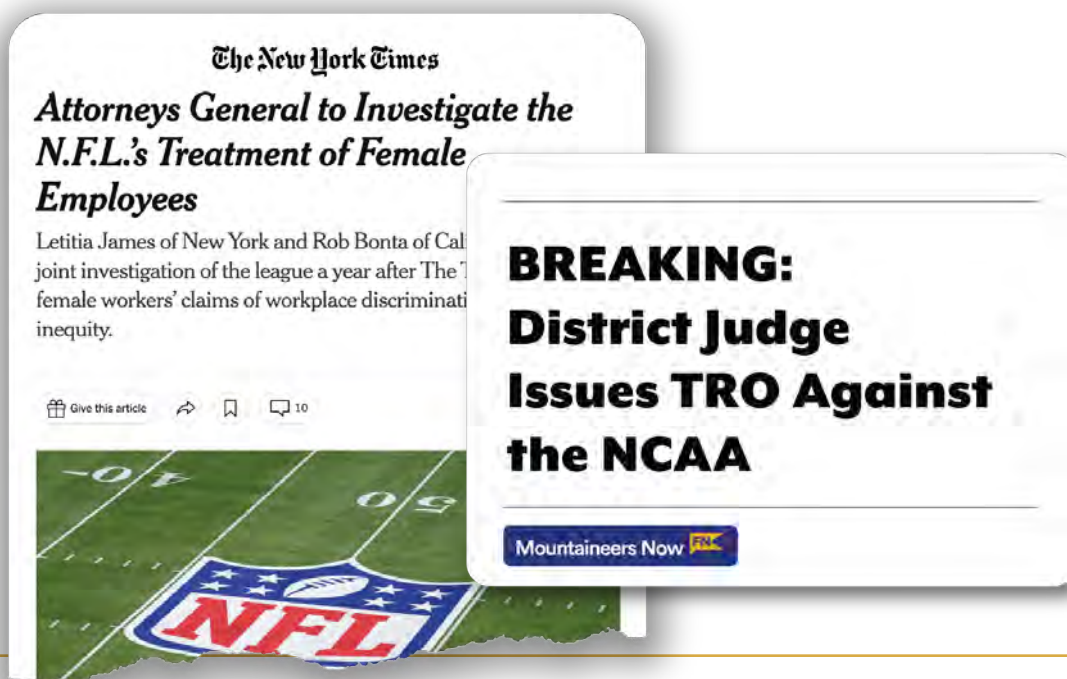
In December, Attorney General James led a coalition of 22 attorneys general urging the U.S. Supreme Court to affirm that states can regulate social-media platforms. The coalition was responding to two cases that challenge laws in Florida and Texas.



Fighting to end harmful practices in the NFL and NCAA

The National Football League (NFL), which has offices in New York and California and more than 1,000 employees, has been plagued with complaints of employment discrimination and a hostile work environment. In May, Attorney General James and California Attorney General Rob Bonta launched a joint investigation into these allegations. The investigation will examine the workplace culture of the NFL and former employees' allegations. If these allegations are verified, the NFL may have violated federal and state pay-equity laws and anti-discrimination laws.

Attorney General James and six other attorneys general sued the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in December for prohibiting athletes from playing on Division I sports teams for a year, when they transfer to a new school for a second time. While the NCAA now allows first-time transfers without a similar restriction, many students wish to transfer more than once. The rule forces students to stay at schools they want to leave or remain benched for a year after transferring. The suit argues that students are not free to market their labor and control their education. A federal district court ruled to prevent the NCAA from putting its rule into practice until the suit goes to trial. Later in December, Attorney General James urged Congress to pass the NCAA Accountability Act of 2023. This law would require the organization to provide transparency in its investigations. The NCAA's current, unchecked power leads to investigations that can harm college athletes, their coaches, and their schools.



Public Safety



Attorney General James has always worked to keep communities all across New York safe. In 2023, that work included dismantling dangerous gun trafficking rings, stemming the flow of illegal weapons into New York, suing gun parts makers that enabled mass shootings, and supporting New Yorkers' right to free speech and peaceful assembly. She continues to hold criminals and criminal organizations to account for endangering New Yorkers. No matter the challenge, she will always work to ensure that our communities remain safe and protected.

Hosting the first ever statewide gun buyback

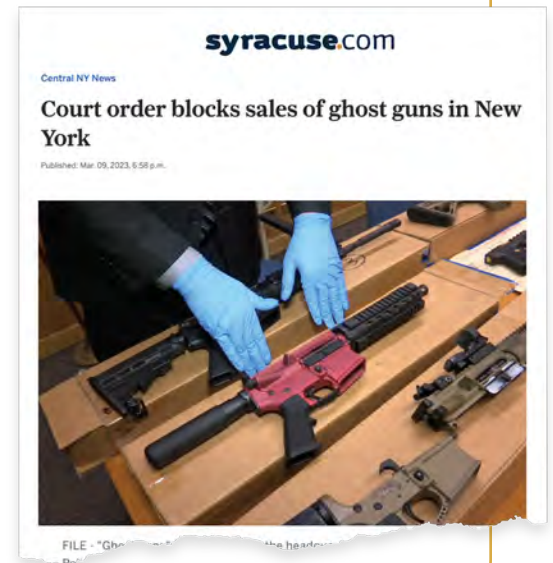
In her ongoing commitment to take guns off our streets and keep our communities safe, Attorney General James held nine simultaneous community gun buybacks across the state of New York. The Attorney General's office coordinated the statewide effort with law enforcement partners across the state, holding all nine buybacks on a single day in April. At each buyback, the Attorney General's office exchanged working and non-working unloaded firearms — with no questions asked — for prepaid gift cards. This massive effort took in more than 3,000 guns across the state. Since taking office in 2019, Attorney General James has removed more than 7,000 guns from New York communities.



Stopping the flow of illegal guns into New York

Ghost guns are kits of gun parts, typically sold online, without serial numbers that are assembled by the purchaser. They can be purchased without a background check and the lack of a serial number means that they are difficult to trace. As a result, they turn up disproportionately at crime scenes. Attorney General James is dedicated to enforcing commonsense gun laws that keep dangerous weapons out of our state. In January, she asked a federal court to order 10 national ghost gun distributors to immediately stop selling and sending unfinished frames or receivers to anyone with a New York address. In March, the court ordered the companies to immediately stop selling ghost gun parts in New York while the lawsuit is ongoing.

In December, Attorney General James co-led a coalition of attorneys general in supporting a proposed rule by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to define when someone must be federally licensed in order to sell a gun. The rule would expand the number of gun sales that require background checks and close loopholes that allow the unlicensed selling of firearms online and at gun shows.



Catching car thieves with their own posts and boasts

Working with 30 local and state law enforcement groups, in August, Attorney General James secured the convictions of six thieves who stole more than \$3 million in cars and cell phones. The individuals committed more than 200 burglaries at auto dealers, cell-phone stores, and ATMs throughout downstate New York, as well as in Connecticut and New Jersey. The thieves would smash the dealerships' windows, drive the stolen cars out of the showrooms, and lead police on dangerous high-speed chases through the neighborhood. Then they would post selfie photos and brag on social media about their crimes, often mere minutes after committing them. Attorney General James' 13-month joint investigation made good use of this evidence, which often pictured the thief with the stolen goods shortly after the robbery.



Suing a gun accessory manufacturer for enabling a mass shooting

All too often, hate-driven violence is fueled by illegal firearms. In May, Attorney General James sued gun accessory maker Mean Arms LLC for aiding the illegal possession of assault weapons in New York. A white supremacist used a Means Arms' magazine lock to modify the gun he used in Buffalo to kill 10 Black New Yorkers in 2022.

The device, which locks an ammunition magazine into a semiautomatic rifle, can easily be removed to allow high-capacity magazines to be inserted into a rifle. The device's packaging prominently displays instructions for removing the lock.

In addition, the company deceptively advertised that installing their lock on a weapon makes the weapon legal in New York. In fact, the device aids and abets the illegal possession of assault weapons, enabling tragedies like the racially motivated Buffalo mass shooting. Attorney General James seeks to stop the company from doing business in New York and to make it pay civil penalties and restitution for its illegal practices that violated state laws and took New Yorkers' lives.

Mean Arms makes and sells the **MA Lock**, a removable gun lock that's marketed as a device to lock a magazine onto a semiautomatic rifle.



SOURCE: SCREENSHOTS FROM MEAN ARMS WEBSITE



But the lock can be easily removed to install high-capacity magazines. Mean Arms provides simple directions to remove the lock.

YOU NEED:



DRILL

DRILL BIT

Mean Arms falsely advertises that the MA Lock is compliant with New York's gun laws:

"...installing the MA Lock makes AR firearms legal and compliant, leaving all your favorite tactical features in place. Installation of the MA Lock provides a true solution to fixed magazine laws, thus eliminating the requirement to register your rifle with your local government."

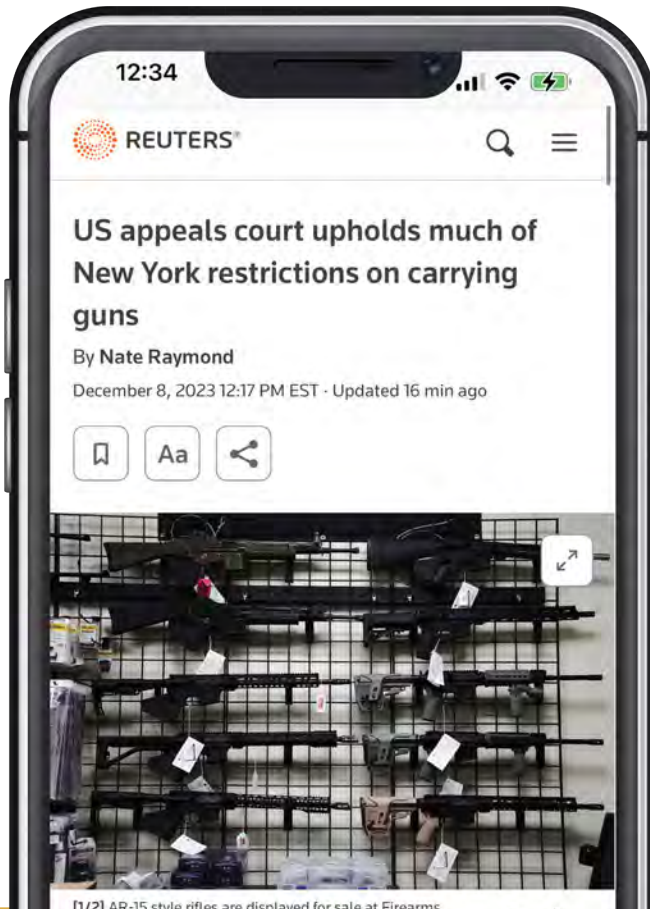
Possessing an assault weapon or high-capacity magazine with more than 10 rounds of ammo is illegal in New York.

Supporting commonsense gun safety laws to protect New Yorkers

Throughout the year, Attorney General James defended New York's own gun-safety laws in numerous cases. She won major victories in both the Second Circuit and the New York Court of Appeals, defending the constitutionality of most of the state's new firearms laws, and defending against challenges to vast numbers of criminal convictions throughout the state for carrying firearms in violation of the old firearms statutes.

While fighting to protect New York's strong laws to protect communities from gun violence, too often the threat comes from outside our borders. Seventy-five percent of crime-related guns recovered in New York originate from other states. To keep New Yorkers safe, Attorney General James vigilantly defends commonsense gun safety laws on the national stage.

Attorney General James worked this year with a coalition of attorneys general to prevent domestic abusers from accessing guns.



She also joined a coalition of 18 attorneys general to support a Delaware law that bans assault weapons and limits high-capacity magazines.

Attorney General James will continue fighting to protect communities from gun violence.

Shutting down dangerous trafficking rings and criminals across the state

This past year, Attorney General James' Organized Crime Task Force (OCTF) continued its work of dismantling violent criminal organizations. Over the course of the year, OCTF broke up five gun and drug trafficking rings in 20 counties throughout New York state, secured indictments of 117 individuals, and convicted more than 84 individuals for their crimes. As a result of Attorney General James' work with law enforcement partners around the state, significant amounts of illegal drugs and guns were seized over the course of the year: 86 firearms, 250 grams of heroin, 15 kilograms of fentanyl, 13,000 fentanyl pills, 6.5 kilograms of cocaine, 50 grams of methamphetamine, 4,500 mixed prescription pills, and over \$500,000 of assets seized for forfeiture.

In March, Attorney General James teamed up with local and state authorities to take down a trafficking operation that illegally sold narcotics, ghost guns, and assault weapons. The result of a 16-month joint investigation was a 123-count indictment charging three individuals with trafficking guns and drugs in New York City and Westchester County. Attorney General James seized 19 firearms, including 12 ghost guns, six high-capacity magazines, and more than 560 grams of cocaine.

In June, Attorney General James took down a major trafficking ring that had been flooding the Finger Lakes with narcotics. The 177-count indictment charged 48 individuals with selling cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, heroin, and other deadly drugs in Cayuga, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates counties. Following a two-year joint investigation, Attorney General James and more than a dozen federal, local, and state law enforcement agencies seized more than 10 kilograms each of fentanyl and cocaine, valued at more than \$9 million; 19 firearms, including assault weapons and ghost guns; and more than \$440,000 in cash.





In November, Attorney General James secured the indictments of 31 people charged with 192 crimes related to two major drug-trafficking networks. The rings were distributing fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine in Onondaga, Oswego, Cortland, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence counties. Law enforcement seized more than \$300,000 worth of fentanyl and heroin, nearly a pound of methamphetamine, 250 grams of cocaine, more than \$16,500 in cash, three illegal firearms, and two vehicles used to transport and distribute narcotics.

Later in November, Attorney General James broke up a major drug-trafficking ring that had been selling heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine in the Capital Region. Investigators seized more than three kilograms of cocaine, about 40 grams of heroin laced with fentanyl, firearms, and more than \$50,000 in cash. Twenty-five people were charged with 164 crimes.

In December, Attorney General James secured the indictment of an individual who had been selling drugs and firearms in New York City and Rockland County. The person was caught with more than 1.5 kilograms of fentanyl, more than 75 grams of heroin, handguns, an assault rifle, and ammunition-feeding devices. The individual was charged with 94 counts.

Fighting to Keep Housing Safe and Affordable



No one should have to struggle to find a safe, affordable place to live, but too many New Yorkers live in dangerous conditions, cannot find a home they can afford, or have no home at all. Attorney General James tirelessly defends individuals' and families' right to a safe, livable home they can afford. Whether she is prosecuting landlords for exposing tenants' young children to toxic lead, retrieving stolen security deposits for renters, or going after deed thieves who leave homeowners homeless, Attorney General James will always protect New Yorkers' right to the good housing they deserve.

Prosecuting deed theft

Newsday

**NY Attorney General:
Joseph Makhani of Kings Point
swindled owners out
of Harlem brownstones**



In July, Attorney General James secured the indictment of a deed thief for stealing two Harlem brownstones. Through a complex scheme involving forged documents and shell companies, the thief purportedly paid only \$10 each for the buildings, which have a combined value of \$4.7 million. The victim of his thefts, a vulnerable and elderly homeowner, has been living in a homeless shelter for years. In another instance of deed theft, the individual tried to evict tenants, causing them confusion and stress.

Deed theft is a growing problem that predominantly targets homeowners of color, leaving victims impoverished, evicted, or even homeless. Until recently, homeowners had little recourse if they were victims of deed theft. A new law enacted this year, drafted by Attorney General James in partnership with the New York state legislature, reforms the state's civil laws to provide more tools to prevent deed theft and help New Yorkers stay in their homes.

THE CITY

**Backed by State AG Letitia
James, Lawmakers Introduce
Bills to Combat Deed Theft**



DAILY NEWS

**Make deed theft a crime, say
NY Democratic lawmakers and
Attorney General
Letitia James**

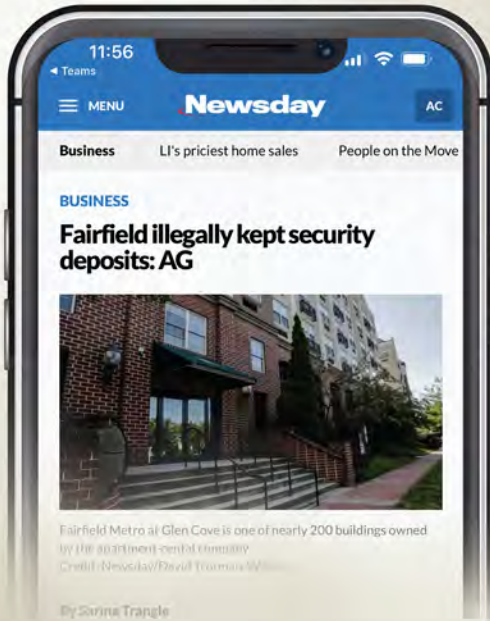
2 WGRZ
ON YOUR SIDE

**Deed thefts on the rise; NY lawmakers
propose legislation to toughen the
penalties**

TIMES UNION

**AG Letitia James to crack down on
'deed theft' amid housing crisis**

Recovering tenants' illegally withheld security deposits



In January, Attorney General James recovered more than \$422,000 in security deposits that Fairfield Properties illegally withheld from 900 former tenants. Fairfield Properties, one of the largest residential property owners on Long Island, illegally withheld security deposits without providing tenants with a written, itemized list of deductions. In addition, the company inspected apartments without tenants present, and did not allow tenants to make repairs before vacating their apartment to avoid penalties. In addition to returning the security deposits, Fairfield must pay \$90,000 in penalties.

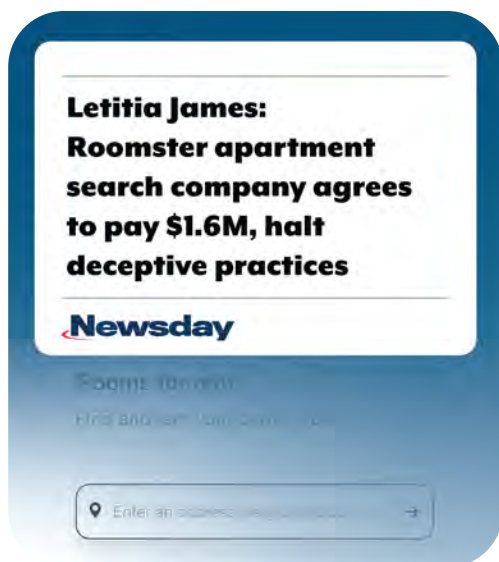
In March, Attorney General James secured nearly \$420,000 from two Brooklyn landlords who broke state rental laws. The landlords illegally rented condo units and single rooms, often without leases and for less than 30 days. Adding to their misdeeds, the landlords repeatedly lied to the OAG. In addition to paying the money to preserve affordable housing in New York City, they agreed to provide tenants with rent-stabilized leases.

Using fraudulent landlords' ill-gotten gains to pay for affordable housing

Recovering money for homeowners denied mortgage relief during the pandemic

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government mandated mortgage holders to offer relief to homeowners. In March, Attorney General James recovered \$350,000 for homeowners in New York City, Long Island, and Rochester who were denied mortgage relief during the COVID-19 pandemic by Servis One Inc., operating as BSI Financial Services Inc. The company had encouraged homeowners who lost their jobs or faced other financial hardships to continue making partial payments on their loans.

Stopping a fraudulent apartment search site



Roomster, an online apartment-finder platform, was cheating its users by posting nonexistent apartment listings and thousands of fake user reviews. In August, Attorney General James, the Federal Trade Commission, and five other attorneys general secured \$1.6 million from Roomster for defrauding hundreds of thousands of customers across the country. The Manhattan-based site had been posting apartment listings without verifying the details or even ensuring that the apartments existed. In addition, Roomster bought and posted more than 20,000 fake reviews to deceive consumers.

Lead poisoning causes physical, mental, and neurological harm and is especially dangerous to young developing children. Old buildings that used lead paint can be hazardous to individuals, if it is not safely managed with simple measures.

In March, Attorney General James sued a Buffalo landlord for repeated and significant violations of lead safety laws at dozens of properties, which are primarily rented to low-income families of color in Buffalo. At least 16 children had been diagnosed with lead poisoning while living in the landlord's properties. More than half the landlord's properties had previously been cited for lead-paint violations.

In May, Attorney General James delivered \$350,000 to Erie County to fight lead poisoning and reduce energy costs for low-income families. This funding will be used to replace windows in low-income homes and continues the Attorney General's support for the Erie County Window Replacement Program. This program has already replaced more than 560 windows in 54 housing units to eliminate lead paint hazards, increase energy efficiency, and save families money on their energy bills.

Fighting lead poisoning and boosting energy efficiency with lead safe windows



New York Attorney General sues
Syracuse landlord for not addressing
lead-based paint hazards



NY Attorney General Suing Syracuse
Landlord For Lead Paint Violations

syracuse.com

Syracuse-area landlord
poisoned 15 children with
lead paint, state AG charges



AG secures court
order against Green
National & Troy Green
for negligence,
code violations

Supporting the Health and Well-Being of New Yorkers



Attorney General James understands all too well the challenges New Yorkers face in obtaining affordable, accessible, and quality health care. That's why she is constantly working to make it just a bit easier for New Yorkers as they navigate finding mental health services, maternal health care, and balance the cost of necessary medications. Her office's helpline helps thousands of consumers navigate a confusing health care system each year. In addition, she pursues fraudulent health care businesses that steal from taxpayers and deceitful companies that promote dangerous or misleading products. She will continue to fight to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to affordable, high-quality health care, no matter their situation or condition.

Fighting to stop the closure of a community birthing center

Following an announcement that St. Peter's Health Partners was planning to close Burdett Birth Center at Samaritan Hospital in Troy, the only maternity ward and birthing center in the county, Attorney General James intervened. In September, she held a public hearing on the closure. Patients, health care providers, first responders, public officials, and other members of the community gathered to provide testimony on how such a closure could affect the area and its residents. Shortly after the hearing and the public pressure, St. Peter's announced that it would delay the closing of Burdett for an additional six months.



To understand the challenges that New Yorkers face in obtaining health care, Attorney General James holds public hearings, where she invites health care providers, community members, and leaders to share their experiences and thoughts.

Demanding that insurers give equal coverage to mental health

Mental health care is health care, yet too often individuals go without life-saving mental health and substance use treatment because they are unable to find care that is covered by insurance, or claims are denied.

In December, Attorney General James uncovered appalling problems with health care insurers' directories of behavioral and substance-use-disorder providers. In an undercover investigation, her office found that of providers listed as in-network, 86 percent could not be reached, were not in the insurer's network, or were not taking new patients.

In October, Attorney General James led a coalition of attorneys general in calling for stronger federal regulations to ensure behavioral health care is given equal coverage to other medical coverage.



Attorney General James' investigation found that insulin out-of-pocket costs were so high that many patients had to either ration their insulin or stop using it. In May and September, Attorney General James reached agreements with the nation's largest insulin manufacturers to make insulin more affordable for uninsured New Yorkers. Eli Lilly and Co., Sanofi-Aventis U.S. LLC, and Novo Nordisk Inc. agreed to cap the monthly price of insulin at \$35 for five years for uninsured New Yorkers.

Lilly and Sanofi agreed to the terms in May, and Novo Nordisk agreed in September. For the next five years, any uninsured New Yorker who uses Lilly, Sanofi, or Novo Nordisk insulin products will not pay more than \$35 per month for insulin. All three companies will offer free insulin to the neediest patients.

Making insulin affordable



Recovering millions for helpline callers



New Yorkers with complaints or questions about their health care have an excellent resource at OAG. The health care helpline handles thousands of inquiries and recovers millions of dollars for consumers each year. The helpline assists New Yorkers with everything from obtaining health care and medications, to solving payment-processing errors, and reporting deceptive business practices.

In 2022, the helpline handled more than 2,300 complaints and recovered more than \$1.5 million for consumers. New Yorkers can file a health care complaint online at ag.ny.gov/insurance-complaint or call the toll-free helpline at 1-800-428-9071.

Shutting down a Queens pharmacy for stealing millions from Medicaid

In July, Attorney General James secured the indictment of the owner and the manager of CSE Drug Corp., doing business as Santiago Pharmacy in Queens, for stealing millions of dollars from Medicaid. Medicaid is a taxpayer-funded program that reimburses providers for medically necessary services to low-income and elderly populations.

The owner and the manager allegedly paid kickbacks to Medicaid recipients in exchange for filling their HIV prescriptions at the pharmacy and submitting false claims for HIV drugs. The owner and the manager were indicted for grand larceny, health care fraud, and paying kickbacks. The owner and the manager were also indicted for money laundering.

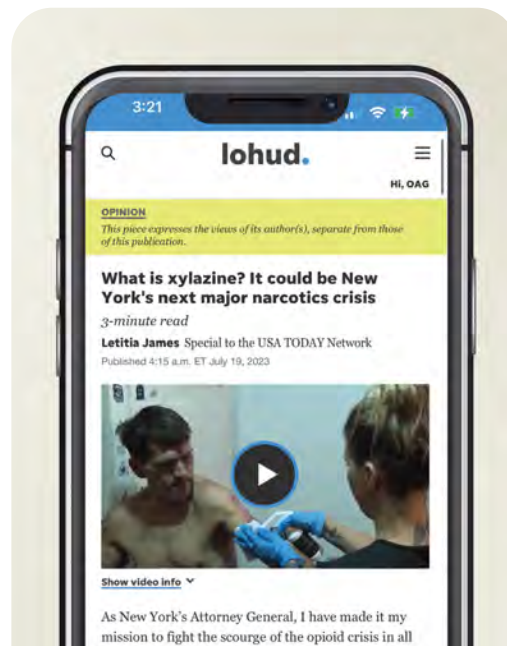
Suing a medical provider that put patients at risk and defrauded Medicaid

In October, Attorney General James and the attorneys general of Georgia and New Jersey sued Fresenius Vascular Care (FVC) for performing needless, risky surgeries on patients with end-stage renal disease. The lawsuit alleges that, for years, FVC subjected dialysis patients to unnecessary medical procedures and defrauded Medicaid. It also alleges that FVC managers instructed doctors to repeatedly schedule invasive procedures to widen or inject dye into patients' veins and arteries, and that some patients received dozens of these unneeded procedures. It also alleges that, although patients were told the treatments were necessary to continue dialysis, the procedures were unnecessary and put the patients at needless risk. Doctors who questioned the scheme were pressured to leave the group. In addition to endangering the patients, the lawsuit alleges FVC's conduct defrauded Medicaid.

Confronting the specter of flesh-eating xylazine

Attorney General James co-led a coalition of 39 attorneys general in a letter to Congress, urging them to protect communities from the ravages of illicit xylazine. Known on the street as “tranq”, xylazine is a deadly drug responsible for the deaths of hundreds of New Yorkers every year. The group of attorneys general urged Congress to pass the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act. This bill would classify the drug as a controlled substance for humans and provide law enforcement with the tools to effectively track and combat the illicit use of xylazine.

Xylazine has complicated the nation’s response to the opioid epidemic. Although it is legal and useful for veterinary purposes, the illicit use of xylazine with opioids, such as fentanyl is dangerous for humans. The use of xylazine can lead to life-threatening injuries, including necrosis, unconsciousness, and even death. The zombie-like state induced by the drug leaves many users vulnerable to robbery or assault. In addition, xylazine does not respond to naloxone, the drug often used to counteract opioid overdoses.



Holding an addiction treatment drugmaker accountable for its illegal monopoly

Using monopolistic tactics to profit from patients’ addictions is despicable — and illegal. In June, Attorney General James and 41 other attorneys general reached a \$102.5 million settlement with Indivior Inc. for anticompetitive abuses of power involving Suboxone, its drug to treat opioid addiction. The agreement settled a 2016 lawsuit against Indivior for illegally suppressing generic versions of the drug. The company used financial inducements, coercion, and delay tactics. In addition, Indivior fabricated safety concerns to switch patients from the original Suboxone sublingual tablet formulation to a new dissolvable oral strip and destroy the market for Suboxone tablets. This prevented competitors from developing lower-cost generic versions of the tablet. Of the \$102.5 million paid to the states, New York received \$5.8 million. Indivior must also provide more transparency in its communications with consumers and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Advocating for Immigrants Rights



With its proud history of being built and shaped by successive waves of immigration, New York owes its rich culture and flourishing economy to immigrants and their descendants. Attorney General James has long fought for equal treatment for immigrant communities that are too often exploited, targeted for discrimination, or neglected and forgotten. She will always work to ensure that New York and the United States continue to be a place that immigrants warmly call home.

Collaborating with non-profit organizations to support the immigrant community

In November, Attorney General James launched a new pro-bono initiative at OAG. She issued an executive order encouraging OAG attorneys to provide free legal assistance to not-for-profit organizations that help underserved New Yorkers. These organizations typically have established pro-bono programs, such as legal clinics. Given the recent surge in immigration in the past months, the initiative first focused on providing aid to immigrants and asylum seekers: helping New Yorkers with immigration documentation, applications for work-authorization applications and asylum, and representation in immigration court.

Urging DHS to speed work permits

Many new migrants to the U.S. are eager to work and support themselves and their families while contributing to our economy. But bureaucratic hurdles and delays prevent many migrants from securing authorization to work from the federal immigration agency. When new migrants are unable to legally work, many must turn to our state and local safety-net programs for basic necessities like food and shelter.

In August and again in December, Attorney General James urged the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to take concrete action to accelerate access to work-authorization permits for new migrants. Along with a coalition of attorneys general, she pointed out that many migrants face insurmountable barriers to work authorization, including fees and lengthy processing times, which could be addressed by DHS. Attorney General James requested swift action to ensure that eligible immigrants can work to support their families, achieve self-sufficiency, and fuel our economy.



Stopping a Yonkers service provider from defrauding immigrants

Many immigrants in the U.S. require help with everything from navigating the health care system to accessing public benefits. Legitimate immigrant-assistance providers can supply a vital resource to new arrivals. But all too often, unethical service providers take advantage of immigrants, deceiving and even cheating them. In August, Attorney General James recovered \$10,000 from an immigrant-assistance provider who misled and threatened immigrants. From 2020 through 2022, the individual posed as an attorney, threatened to report a customer to immigration authorities, and violated New York's immigrant-protection laws.

Attorney General James co-hosted a Ramadan iftar with the Muslim Officers Society at the Turkish American Eyüp Sultan Cultural Center in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, in April.

She broke bread and helped serve the iftar dinner with community members, local leaders and members of law enforcement.

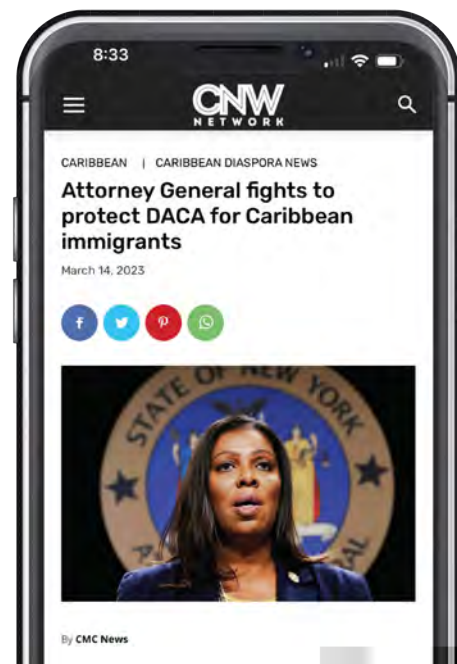


Standing up for Dreamers

For centuries, New York has been a home to immigrants and refugees from around the world who come to our shores seeking a better life. Attorney General James is proud to represent the myriad immigrant communities that make New York strong and vibrant. She refuses to stand idly when political leaders maliciously try to tear down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA allows eligible young adults to live, study, and work across the U.S. without fearing forcible separation from their families and communities.

In March, Attorney General James co-led a coalition of attorneys general in pushing back against the ongoing effort by Texas to end DACA. DACA is critical for the country and the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers and their families who depend on the program and who support their communities with billions of dollars in taxes, substantial spending power, and valuable skills and talents.

This is not the first time that Attorney General James has stepped up to protect DACA against repeated attacks by other states and the federal government. In 2021, she co-led a coalition of attorneys general to support DACA against earlier attacks by Texas. In 2020, she successfully argued that the Trump administration's attempt to dismantle DACA was illegal, co-led a coalition of attorneys general in fighting DHS's attempts to deport Dreamers, and successfully fought to loosen severe restrictions on DACA.



Attorney General James hosted a Jewish heritage pre-Hanukkah celebration, joined by elected officials and community leaders who came out to salute the rich heritage of the Jewish community in New York.

■ Preserving Reproductive Rights

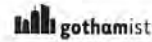


A fierce defender and advocate of reproductive health care and abortion rights, Attorney General James has protected patients' rights for decades in New York as well as in the national arena. This year, she continued defending patients' rights to safely access health care clinics and fought oppressive laws that limit reproductive health care. Attorney General James will never stop battling unjust policies and practices that seek to sabotage others' rights to make their own health decisions.

Defending New Yorkers' access to medication abortion

Since February, Attorney General James has led a multistate coalition challenging a federal court's decision to restrict patients' access to mifepristone, the first of two drugs used in medication abortions. The restrictions were imposed by a Texas trial court judge in a lawsuit brought by anti-abortion groups. They seek to limit patients' access to medication abortion nationwide by invalidating the FDA's initial approval of the drug in 2000. Doing so would cast the generic drug's approval status into doubt. The restrictions would also invalidate later regulations that increased access to the medication.

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case in the future. As the appeals process moves forward, Attorney General James will use the full force of her office to help ensure that medication abortion options, including mifepristone, remain available and protected in New York.



NY AG James urges Texas judge to reject request that could ban abortion medication nationwide

Attorneys General pen open letter to pharmacies supporting access to medication abortion

Refusing to let patients and practitioners be harassed

Too often, antiabortion groups aggressively intimidate patients and health care practitioners providing lawful reproductive health care. In June, Attorney General James sued Red Rose Rescue and its members for invading reproductive health care clinics and interfering with patients' ability to obtain care. The organization has repeatedly trespassed at abortion clinics across New York and other states throughout the country, physically occupying waiting rooms, and barricading entrances, in violation of the U.S. Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act and the New York State Clinic Access Act. In December, a court granted an injunction prohibiting the group and its members from coming within 15 feet of any reproductive health care facility in numerous counties across the southern and eastern part of New York State.



New York AG hits anti-abortion group with lawsuit for blocking access to health care clinics

BY KAHAN FORTINSKY - 06/06/23 8:53 PM ET



FILE — New York Attorney General Letitia James speaks during a press conference, Sept. 21, 2022. New York. Embossed electronic signature of Letitia James, New York Attorney General, in the District of Columbia. The youth of

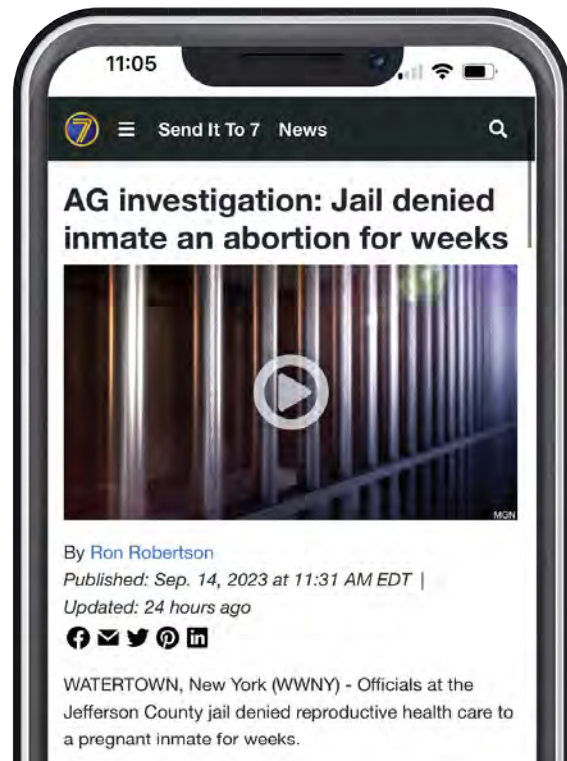
Supporting stronger federal protections for reproductive health data

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, many antiabortion states have enacted or enforced harsh restrictions that could lead to criminal or civil penalties for anyone seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating lawful reproductive care. In June, Attorney General James co-led a coalition of attorneys general supporting an increase in federal protections for patients' private reproductive health information. The states supported the proposed rulemaking by the Biden administration that amended the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. This proposed rule would prohibit the use or disclosure of a patient's protected health information if it is sought for investigating or prosecuting anyone seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating lawful reproductive care.



Protecting reproductive rights in a Jefferson County jail

A jail in Jefferson County repeatedly denied abortion care to a pregnant woman for weeks. In September, after an investigation by the Attorney General, the Jefferson County Correctional Facility agreed to protect inmates' rights to reproductive care through new policies and trainings. The investigation found that the facility's medical director and health care staff refused to provide abortion care to the woman, canceled her appointments, and pressured her to cancel the procedure. She finally received the abortion a month after her initial request.



**Free legal hotline for legal guidance on accessing
safe abortion services in our state:**

212-899-5567

ag.ny.gov/reproductivehealth

Standing Up for the LGBTQ+ Community



Everyone has the right to express their gender identity and choose their life partners without fear of threat or discrimination. A longtime ally of the LGBTQ+ community, Attorney General James tirelessly continues to defend New Yorkers who are victimized for their identity or sexuality. Whether it's by standing up for transgender youth, supporting diversity and inclusion in our schools, or hosting a drag story hour, she fights hatred and discrimination to protect everyone's sacred right to be who they are.

Hosting a drag read-a-thon

As LGBTQ+ people have become increasingly targeted, drag story hours are a way to advocate for inclusion, celebrate diversity, and enjoy storytelling. Pushing back against misinformation, homophobia, and hatred, Attorney General James continues to stand up for the LGBTQ+ community in numerous ways. In March, she proudly joined a broad coalition of advocacy organizations and elected leaders to host a first-of-its-kind drag story hour read-a-thon for families in New York City. Nearly 200 guests enjoyed four back-to-back story hours hosted by the drag kings, queens, and other royalty of Drag Story Hour NYC at The Center, which has been a home and resource hub for the LGBTQ+ community and allies since its founding in 1983.



Attorney General James strongly supports transgender athletes' right to participate in sports, free of discrimination. In May, she led a coalition of 12 attorneys general urging the U.S. Department of Education to adopt a rule that would prevent schools from receiving federal funding if they discriminate against transgender athletes. The coalition emphasized the importance of protecting students' right to participate in sports in accordance with their gender identity, and that equal access to sports has many educational and social benefits for the students.

Advocating for Antidiscrimination protections for Transgender Athletes

Fighting transgender discrimination at the national level

Discriminating against people because of their gender status harms our economy and educational system, as well as New Yorkers' emotional and physical health. Attorney General James continues to fight to protect young transgender students from such harms.

In April, Attorney General James co-led a coalition of 18 attorneys general to support a transgender student who was barred from joining her school's cross country team under a West Virginia law that bans transgender students from participating on sports teams consistent with their gender identity. The coalition argued that the sole purpose of the law is to exclude and stigmatize transgender students that the law clearly violates equal protection under the law.

In October, Attorney General James co-led a coalition of 21 attorneys general to support a transgender student's right to use a school bathroom that aligned with their gender identity in Wisconsin. The coalition argued that protecting transgender people's right to use facilities that align with their gender identity benefits everyone. Doing so does not compromise safety or privacy, and does not significantly increase costs. In addition, the coalition argued that the public school that barred the student from that restroom violated the federal statute Title IX, as well as the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment.

amNY

AG Tish James leads multi-state coalition to protect transgender students' rights to join sports teams based on their gender identity



Combating Racism and Discrimination



Attorney General James is committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers enjoy equal treatment under the law. Wherever she sees discrimination, she will always challenge it and stand up for the rights of the victimized. Whether she is dealing with conspiracy theorists intimidating Black voters, real estate agents treating minority homebuyers as second-class citizens, or any other instances of bias, she defends the victimized and sees that they receive fair treatment and justice.

Winning against racist conspiracy theorists

In March, Attorney General James won in court against Jacob Wohl and Jack Burkman for using robocalls to threaten and harass Black New Yorkers during the 2020 elections. Wohl and Burkman sought to sabotage New York's efforts to administer its elections during the COVID-19 crisis and intimidate voters. Wohl and Burkman targeted Black communities with robocalls claiming that mail-in voters' personal information would be given to law enforcement, debt collectors, and government personnel. The campaign reached about 5,500 New Yorkers. Following Attorney General James' lawsuit against Wohl and Burkman, a federal court ruled that they violated state and federal laws by using robocalls to threaten and harass Black communities with false information.



Judge says Jacob Wohl, Jack Burkman violated Voting Rights Act, KKK Act with 2020 voter suppression

Ensuring fairness in car rentals

In New York, it is illegal to refuse to rent a car to someone who does not pay with a credit card. Many people, particularly those in low-income communities, do not have credit cards. Attorney General James secured \$275,000 from Avis Budget Group Inc. for illegally denying car rentals to consumers who did not provide a credit card. At 74 locations across the state, employees told customers – including the Attorney General's investigators – that Avis required a credit card to rent a vehicle. In addition to paying the penalty, Avis must train its employees to ensure that they are complying with the law.

Safeguarding equal treatment for homebuyers of color

An OAG investigation found that Coldwell Banker may have been discriminating against Black, Hispanic, and other homebuyers of color on Long Island. The company may have had different requirements for these homebuyers than for white homebuyers and directed them to neighborhoods primarily of color. The company paid \$20,000 in penalties and \$10,000 to Suffolk County to support fair housing testing and agreed to train its agents in fair housing practices.

In September, Attorney General James announced a significant agreement to reform the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) treatment of peaceful protests, signifying an important step towards promoting peaceful assembly. The agreement protects the public and reporters from police officers' excessive use of force. Attorney General James had sued the NYPD in 2021 for its treatment of peaceful protestors during the previous summer. Her investigation found that NYPD officers had unjustifiably used batons, pepper spray, and a herding tactic called "kettling" to control crowds, and had made many wrongful arrests. The agreement introduces a four-tiered response system to guide officers' presence at protests and a new oversight role in NYPD. Officers must use de-escalation methods first, cannot use kettling, and must improve their treatment of the press. This agreement was forged together with the Legal Aid Society and the New York Civil Liberties Union. The agreement is still being reviewed by the courts.

Protecting peaceful protestors from excessive use of force



Platzner International Group (PIG) and its owners and properties had been refusing to rent to low-income renters in Westchester County. Attorney General James found that, through these practices, PIG had violated federal, state, and local housing laws. In October, she secured an agreement with PIG to stop its unfair practices. PIG will set aside 20 units for applicants using housing subsidies and pay \$10,000 to the Housing Rights Initiative and \$95,000 to the Westchester Residential Opportunities.

Stopping discrimination against low-income tenants

Highlighting disturbing inequalities in homeownership

In October, Attorney General James issued a groundbreaking report about deep racial inequalities in homeownership across New York State. Every region shows a huge gap between white and nonwhite households in homeownership and access to home financing. White households own their homes at nearly double the rate of households of color. In addition, applicants of color are denied mortgages at higher rates than white applicants, regardless of income, credit score, and other factors. As a result, communities of color face huge obstacles to building financial security, passing on wealth within their families, and overcoming decades of discrimination in the housing market. In addition to highlighting the issues, the report offers policy solutions to help close the gap.

New NY AG report cites 'stark' racial disparities in homeownership, mortgage lending

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Mortgage obstacles for Blacks, Latinos create 'stark' homeownership gap, AG report says

Newsday



Speaking up for a charity's right to support businesswomen of color

In December, Attorney General James led a coalition of 19 attorneys general in supporting Fearless Foundation, a private charity in Georgia founded to help businesswomen of color. The charity had been sued by the American Alliance for Equal Rights for limiting one of its grant programs to Black women entrepreneurs. The suit claimed that Fearless Foundation was illegally discriminating against non-Black women on the basis of race.

Attorney General James pointed out that the suit was based on the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was intended to protect the rights of enslaved people who had been newly freed. The Act was passed in the context of a growing and vibrant charitable tradition aimed at helping these newly liberated people and other disadvantaged groups. The lawsuit was based on a misinterpretation of the Act that read it to harm the very people it had been devised to protect.

Addressing discrimination and harassment in schools

In July, Attorney General James announced a pivotal agreement with the Mamaroneck Union Free School District to combat bullying and harassment against students. Her investigation began in 2020, after students and parents complained that administrators had failed to adequately address race and gender-based bullying and harassment. Students were repeatedly degraded and discriminated against by their classmates for months across various schools. The harassment decreased students' ability to learn, socialize, and feel safe within their schooling environment.

The district agreed to implement substantial policy changes, provide student counseling, and collect data and report to Attorney General James about its responses to future instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.



Attorney General James paid a July visit to the Joshua House, a nonprofit in Owego that seeks to transform the lives of at-risk youth in the Greater Binghamton area, where she spoke about preventing youth drug abuse.

Keeping Seniors and Retirees Safe

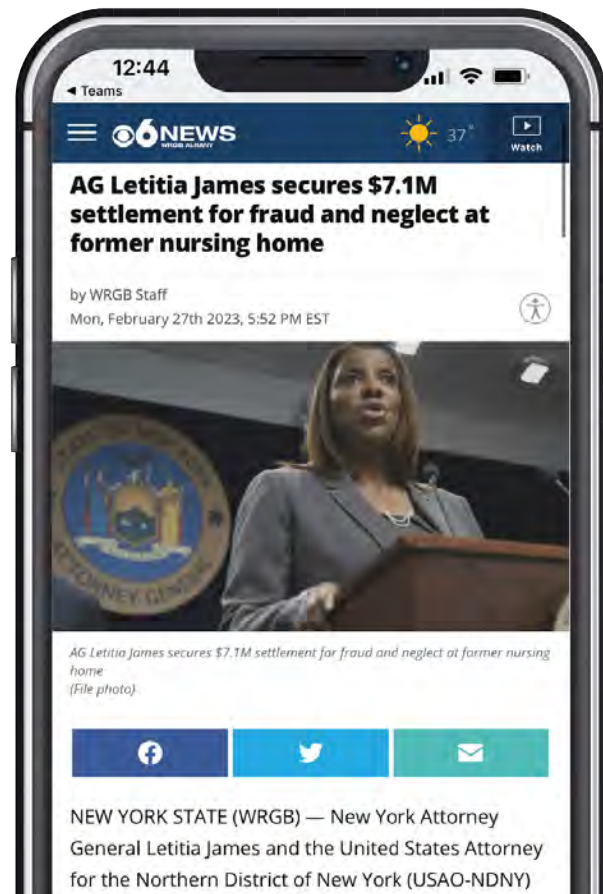


Senior New Yorkers are especially vulnerable to negligent, fraudulent, and corrupt individuals and companies. Too often, they suffer in silence from violent assault, cruel neglect, or shameful fraud. When it comes to those who victimize or exploit elder New Yorkers, Attorney General James spares no effort to bring lawbreakers to account.

Suing nursing homes and their owners for repeated neglect and fraud

To address the significant neglect of nursing home residents, in June, Attorney General James sued the owners, operators, and landlords of four nursing homes, as well as the company that managed these homes – Centers Health Care. The lawsuit alleges that for years these individuals repeatedly defrauded Medicare and Medicaid, illegally siphoning more than \$83 million in taxpayer money. The lawsuit alleges that the owners pocketed funds that should have been used to provide the required care and sufficient staffing. This lack of sufficient staffing and adequate care caused horrific resident neglect, humiliation, and harm.

The lawsuit alleges that residents were left to sit for hours in their own urine and feces and suffered from severe dehydration and malnutrition. The lawsuit also alleges that residents developed infections and sepsis from untreated bed sores and improper wound care, and also suffered bone-breaking falls. One of the residents unfortunately died. In July, the court granted the Attorney General's request for a preliminary injunction and imposed an independent health care monitor and independent financial monitor for the nursing homes.



In February, Attorney General James secured more than \$7.1 million from the owners, landlord, and operator of a former nursing home in Ballston Spa for years of fraud and patient neglect. The home, Saratoga Center, fell into disrepair in 2017, after its landlord pressured the owners to allow an unlicensed operator to control the facility. None of the individuals reported the change to the Department of Health. Conditions at the home deteriorated quickly, leading to a breakdown in quality of care to residents. The facility failed to provide timely and appropriate medication to residents and lacked hot water and clean linens. Residents suffered excessive and unnecessary falls, and developed pressure sores that went untreated.

Attorney General James secured an additional \$656,000 from the unlicensed operator of Saratoga Center in December.

THE BUFFALO NEWS
AG Letitia James alleges nursing home operator that owns Buffalo Center misused \$83M in taxpayer funds

The New York Times
Nursing Homes Defrauded Taxpayers of \$83 Million, Lawsuit Says

📺 CBS NEWS
Attorney General Letitia James files lawsuit against White Plains and New York City nursing homes

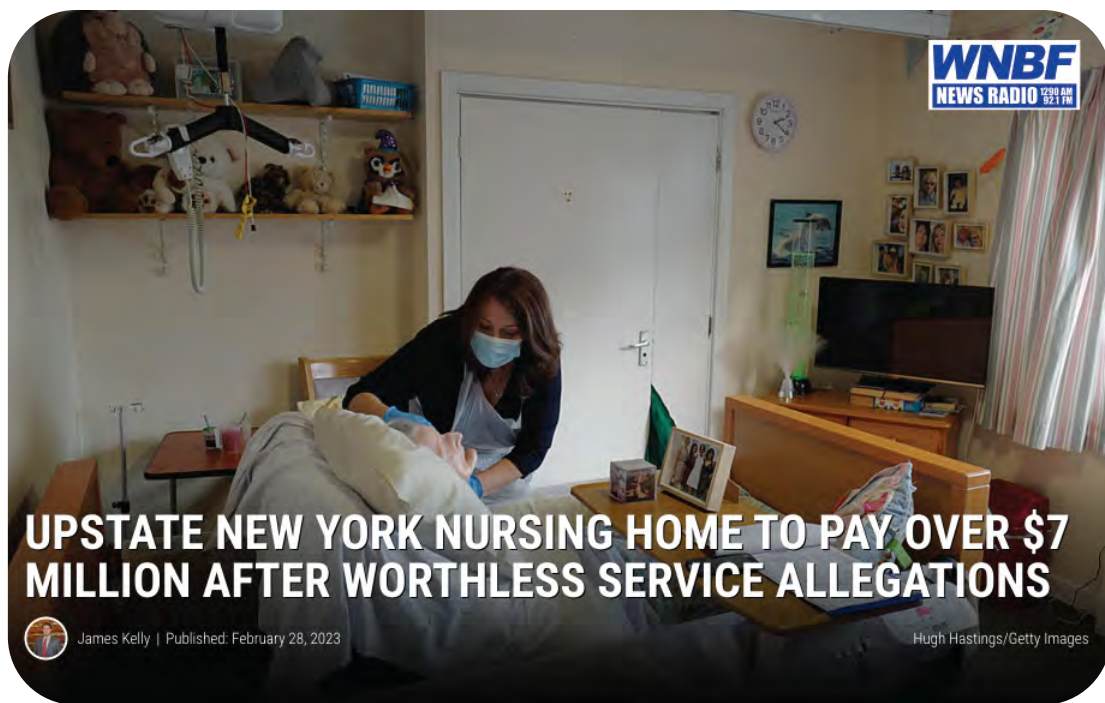
Protecting seniors from abuse

In January, Attorney General James ensured a former nursing-home employee was sentenced to 25 years in prison for raping an 81-year-old who suffers from dementia. This occurred during their time as a resident of the Shore Winds Nursing Home in Rochester in 2021. The sentencing also included 20 years of post-release supervision.



Allowing patients and caregivers to choose their provider

Two home-care companies, Affordable Senior Care of New York LLC and Marks Homecare Agency Inc., were preventing patients and their caregivers from choosing the provider of their choice. An investigation by Attorney James' office found that Affordable had made an illegal no-poach market allocation pact with its competitor Marks, agreeing not to take one another's existing patients. As a result, vulnerable patients were unable to switch to a provider who could have paid their caregivers more. In February, Attorney General James secured an agreement prohibiting Affordable from entering any anti-competitive agreements in the future. In addition, Affordable paid the state \$400,000 and will cooperate with OAG's ongoing investigations in the home-care industry.



Recovering funds stolen by kickback scheme

For more than a decade, Gramercy Cardiac, and its owner, illegally paid kickbacks to physicians for patient referrals. In September, Attorney General James secured more than \$3.3 million from Gramercy Cardiac. The money will be returned to Medicaid, with nearly \$2 million going to New York state.

■ Defending Workers



Each and every day, New Yorkers work hard to make our state's economy flourish. In spite of their long hours and backbreaking labor, many of them have trouble making ends meet. Too many endure unsafe conditions, discrimination, abuse, or wage theft just to put food on the table. Attorney General James is a champion for all working New Yorkers, tirelessly taking on any challenge brought by abusive or greedy employers. This year, she challenged powerful employers who subjected their employees to harassment, unfair practices, and theft, recovering thousands of dollars in stolen pay and restoring workers' dignity. She will always stand up for workers to see that each is treated fairly under the law.

Ending harmful no-poach agreements at powerful insurance companies

No-poach agreements between companies stifle competition and harm workers' chances for higher wages and better job opportunities. In these illegal arrangements, competitors agree not to solicit one another's employees. To date, Attorney General James has secured \$13.75 million from title-insurance companies and ended these harmful practices among powerful companies.

In March, Attorney General James declared an end to no-poach practices at Fidelity National Financial Inc., the nation's largest title insurance company. Fidelity agreed to pay New York \$3.5 million. In July, Attorney General James secured \$1 million from Kensington Vanguard National Land Services LLC for its no-poach agreement with its underwriters. And, in October, she secured \$4.5 million from First American Financial Corp., which had entered no-poach agreements with its competitors. In addition to ending their illegal no-poach practices, all three companies agreed to cooperate with future investigations.

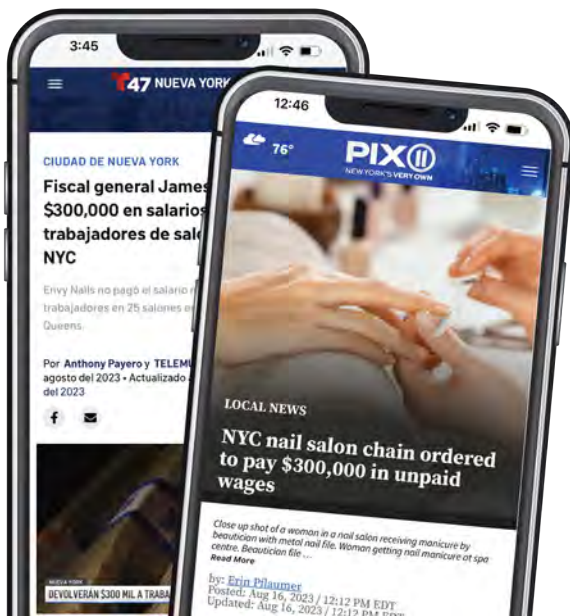


In January, Attorney General James joined Queens Borough President Donovan Richards and New York State Nurses Association Executive Director Pat Kane on a picket line supporting nurses who were on strike.



In September, Attorney General James joined New York State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento, New York City Labor Council President Vincent Alvarez, SAG-AFTRA New York's President Ezra Knight and Executive Director Rebecca Damon, Ellen Barking, Oscar Isaac, and other members of SAG-AFTRA to support screen actors who were on strike.

Protecting the wages of nail salon workers in New York City



Workers in nail salons put in long hours of excruciating work, and often receive no time off or health insurance. Their pay is the only compensation they receive.

In August, Attorney General James recovered more than \$300,000 for over 100 workers at Nail Envy salons in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens. From 2015 to 2021, the 25 salons had illegally paid less than minimum wage to their workers, many of whom were immigrants or people of color. In addition, one of the salons had evaded paying sales tax from 2014 through 2019, and must pay tax judgments of more than \$275,000 to New York.

Winning wages for unpaid employees of a Manhattan dance company

company, H+ The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory. H+ labeled the workers as “apprentices” and “students” and did not pay them for considerable hours of work teaching, performing, and doing many administrative and operational tasks. Although the organization made money on its performances, it did not compensate the workers for any of their work. It used the profits instead to pay the living expenses of its business leaders. In addition, the organization’s founder treated women workers worse than men, and pressured women to be sexually available. By not paying its employees, H+ violated federal and state labor laws. By discriminating against women, the organization violated the New York State Human Rights Law.

In December, Attorney General James won \$10,000 for nine workers who were cheated of their wages by a Manhattan dance

Leading the Fight to Protect Our Environment



New York is home to some of the richest natural resources in the country. But the pollution of our air, water, and land harms our health and environment; and global climate change continues to threaten our homes, as well as our native plant and animal life. Too often, low-income neighborhoods and communities of color suffer disproportionately from these environmental injustices. Attorney General James is a fierce champion of New York's communities and continues to fight to ensure that we all have clean air, water, and land. She works with communities to understand local challenges, priorities, and ideas for solutions for public health and environmental problems. She takes powerful legal actions to protect the environment, often partnering with other state agencies or the federal government to find creative, multifaceted ways to protect the health of New Yorkers and the state's natural resources.

Cleaning up a commercial polluter in Delhi

Attorney General James, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), secured \$2.88 million from a Delaware County manufacturer for alleged violations of the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and state pollution control laws. For years,

FrieslandCampina Ingredients North America Inc. had been emitting large amounts of toluene, a hazardous air pollutant that can damage the kidney, liver, and nervous and immune systems. Toluene also contributes to the formation of smog, which at high levels can trigger asthma, worsen bronchitis and emphysema, and cause early death. The company had also been discharging alleged illegal levels of water pollutants to the local wastewater treatment plant. This plant discharges into the West Branch of the Delaware River, which is part of the New York City water supply system. Of the \$2.88 million, \$1.44 million will fund projects benefiting public health and the environment in the Delhi area.

Suing waste haulers who ignore environmental laws

To guard against mishandling and mismanagement of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, our environmental

laws and regulations provide that such waste may lawfully be disposed of only at facilities authorized to receive that type of waste. Anyone who violates these laws endangers us and our environment. In March, Attorney General James and DEC sued 29 waste haulers and brokers for the alleged illegal dumping of C&D waste at a site in Saugerties. The companies transported more than 3,000 truckloads of waste from New York City to the site, which was authorized to accept C&D waste only from Ulster and Dutchess counties. The companies allegedly repeatedly violated state law with their actions. The lawsuit seeks to hold them accountable with civil penalties and other relief, including disgorgement of all revenues wrongfully obtained from their unlawful activities.



Celebrating Earth Day by funding environmental education

In April, Attorney General James and DEC announced a \$100,000 grant for educational environmental programs at the new Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center in Brooklyn. This funding was obtained from a 2010 settlement with ExxonMobil over its Greenpoint oil spill. Earlier grants supported the creation of the new library and education center. Funds from the grant will support library programs, such as the Greenpoint Environmental History Project, gardening clubs, science and sustainability workshops, and community environmental-justice initiatives.



Securing \$6.9 million from Roundup makers for false advertising

In June, Attorney General James secured \$6.9 million from Bayer CropScience LP and Monsanto Co. for allegedly making false and misleading claims about the environmental safety of certain Roundup weedkillers. Bayer and Monsanto repeatedly advertised, without adequate substantiation, that these products were safe and nontoxic. These claims violated state laws against false and misleading advertising. In addition, Monsanto violated a 1996 settlement with OAG, in which the company had committed to stop making unsubstantiated claims regarding the safety of these pesticide products. The money secured from Bayer will go directly to prevent, abate, restore, mitigate, or control the impacts of toxic pesticides.



■ Championing the Security of New York's Cryptocurrency Marketplace

With its uneven regulations, a lack of transparency, volatile market movements, and abundant conflicts of interest, cryptocurrency markets carry significant risk for investors. In this confusing new marketplace, Attorney General James remains vigilant in her efforts to protect consumers from scams, and hacks. Whether it's supporting legislation to make cryptocurrency platforms more transparent, watching out for unregistered broker-dealers, or prosecuting fraudsters, Attorney General James will continue to guard against abuses and neglect in this industry. This year, she took action against 7 cryptocurrency companies and 4 cryptocurrency company CEOs, recovering \$29 million and suing for over \$1 billion on behalf of investors.

Suing digital asset companies for defrauding investors of \$3 billion

Three major digital-asset companies defrauded more than 230,000 investors, including at least 29,000 New Yorkers, for more than \$3 billion. In October, Attorney General James sued cryptocurrency exchange Gemini Trust, lender Genesis Capital, and Genesis's parent Digital Currency Group for lying to investors and going to great lengths to hide their devastating losses. Attorney General James is also suing the CEOs of Genesis Capital and Digital Currency Group for their roles in the fraud. Many investors, including some who had carefully researched the companies, lost their life savings by believing the misrepresentations they were told.

Gemini claimed that its Gemini Earn program, which it ran with Genesis, was a low-risk investment that earned high returns, however the companies knew that the program had high risks. The managers of Gemini's recognized that Genesis loans were intolerably risky and recommended ending the program, but the companies instead covered up their losses. At one point, nearly 60 percent of Genesis loans were tied up with Alameda Research, the now-bankrupt hedge fund founded by Sam Bankman-Fried. In 2022, Gemini and Genesis took a \$1.1 billion promissory note with Digital Currency to hide their losses and give the impression that the investments were safe.

WENT AFTER

4

cryptocurrency
CEOs

RECOVERED

\$29

million

TOOK ACTION AGAINST

7

cryptocurrency
companies

Taking action against an unregistered broker-dealer

In June, Attorney General James recovered more than \$1.7 million from CoinEx, a cryptocurrency platform, for failing to register as a broker-dealer and falsely representing itself as an exchange. Her investigators in New York were able to buy and sell cryptocurrencies on the platform, even though CoinEx was unregistered in the state. By allowing investors to trade cryptocurrencies

without being registered, CoinEx violated New York's Martin Act.

In addition to refunding thousands of New York investors, the company is banned from operating in New York state.



Stopping an unregistered cryptocurrency platform

Attorney General James secured more than \$22 million in December from KuCoin, a cryptocurrency trading platform, for failing to register as a broker-dealer and falsely representing itself as an exchange. The platform, which was not registered to deal in securities and commodities, allowed investors to buy and sell popular virtual currencies that are all securities and commodities. KuCoin also issued its own securities product called KuCoin Earn. In addition, the company claimed to be an exchange without having registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or appropriately being designated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. KuCoin must refund more than \$16.7 million to 150,000 New York investors and pay more than \$5.3 million to the state. In addition, the company can no longer operate in New York or make its platform available to New Yorkers.

Attorney General James recovered \$4.3 million from a Brooklyn based Bitcoin dealer who promised to provide “free” wallet storage to its customers, but in actuality charged exorbitant and undisclosed fees for providing those services. Attorney General James’ enforcement action ensured the return of 100 percent of those fees to all of Coin Café’s more than 300 New York customers. Moving forward, Coin Café must unambiguously state the amount of fees it will charge and display the fee in U.S. dollars rather than as a percentage of Bitcoin. In addition, the amount of fees they can charge is now capped.

Capping Excessive and Misleading Fees by Unregistered Bitcoin Dealer

In January, Attorney General James sued Alex Mashinsky, a cofounder and former CEO of cryptocurrency lending platform Celsius Network LLC, for defrauding hundreds of thousands of investors out of billions of dollars. Mashinsky made false and misleading statements about Celsius’s safety to encourage investors, including more than 26,000 New Yorkers, to deposit billions of dollars. As Celsius lost hundreds of millions of dollars of assets in risky investments, Mashinsky covered up the company’s deteriorating financial condition. Attorney General James seeks to require Mashinsky to pay restitution and to ban him from doing business in New York. Seven months after Attorney General James brought the suit, Mashinsky was arrested and indicted based on similar allegations.

Protecting investors from fraud



Protecting the Interests of Consumers



From false advertising to con artists to computer hackers, New Yorkers face a never-ending stream of predators whose primary goal is to steal consumers' money, belongings, or identity. Attorney General James will stop at nothing to protect consumers from frauds, thieves, and negligent businesses. This year, she fought hard to bring fraudulent businesses, price gougers, and predatory lenders to justice. As the lawbreakers continue to evolve their practices, Attorney General James will continue to investigate and bring them to account and ensure that all New Yorkers can enjoy the safety and well-being that they deserve.

Businesses of all types hold consumers' personal, protected, or sensitive data and use this information for identification and transactions purposes. If a business does not take careful steps to safeguard the data, its networks are vulnerable to breaches and consumers are at risk of identity theft. As in previous years, Attorney General James vigilantly continues to protect the private information of New Yorkers' from cyberattacks. In 2023, Attorney General James secured agreements with 10 companies that had data security lapses affecting over 3 million New Yorkers, penalizing the companies over \$8.5 million. These agreements include:

\$2.9 million secured for New Yorkers from cloud-storage company Blackbaud. The company suffered a 2020 massive data breach that exposed the personal information of customers of more than 13,000 nonprofit organizations and their donors and stakeholders nationwide.

\$10 million secured from a payment processor that had mistakenly withdrawn \$2.3 billion from mortgage holders' accounts. Of this amount, \$575,000 will go to New York. ACI Worldwide made the withdrawals during a testing error in 2021.

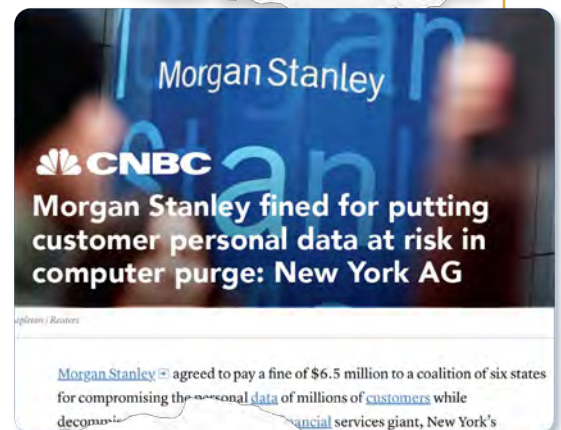
\$1.7 million secured for New York from Morgan Stanley Smith Barney for failing to erase clients' personal information from decommissioned computers that it sold at auctions. The company's lapse in security affected 1.1 million New Yorkers.

Ensuring greater security for consumers' data



THE BUFFALO NEWS

AG: Amherst medical management firm to pay \$550K for 'failing to protect patients' data'



N.Y.'s Attorney General Fines Sports Warehouse After Data Breach

Shielding consumers and small businesses from price gouging

During emergencies, like natural disasters or pandemics, some sellers illegally increase the prices of essential goods or services to take advantage of consumers. In March, Attorney General James proposed rules to protect consumers and small businesses and strengthen enforcement of New York's price-gouging law. The proposed rules would set clear guidelines for identifying illegitimate price increases during emergencies. These guidelines would also make it more straightforward to investigate and combat price gouging.

Holding companies to account for faking comments

In May, Attorney General James secured \$615,000 from LCX, Lead ID, and Ifficient after they supplied millions of fake public comments to influence the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) 2017 net neutrality proceeding. The FCC was considering a repeal of net-neutrality rules, under which broadband providers were prohibited from blocking, slowing down, or charging companies to prioritize content on the internet. The three companies used the identities of millions of consumers, including thousands of New Yorkers, to generate fake comments, which were then used by the nation's largest broadband companies to provide cover for the FCC's repeal.

Returning \$77 million to small businesses

In September, Attorney General James secured a legal victory against three predatory lenders who were charging small businesses illegal interest rates and fees. A court ordered the lenders to pay back the interest and overcharges and cancel the borrowers' debts, totaling millions of dollars. Richmond Capital Group, Ram Capital Funding, and Viceroy Capital Funding had preyed upon thousands of businesses. In one example, a small business that borrowed \$10,000 was required to pay back \$19,900 within 10 days. In a historic judgment in February 2024, the court ordered RCG Advances to pay more than \$77 million.

In January, New York Attorney General James reached an agreement with Bell Pet Company LLC, which operates as The Pet Zone, for misleading New Yorkers about the health of pets they sold in their stores. The company, which operates in Albany, Poughkeepsie, Watertown, and Queensbury, provided buyers with incomplete medical records that did not list all the medications the pets were receiving. Once the consumers brought their new pets home, they found that the animals were sick.

Bell Pet will pay a civil penalty and create a restitution fund of up to \$200,000 to reimburse eligible consumers for medical costs.

Reimbursing buyers of sick pets



**NY pet store company
tricked people into
purchasing sick pets: AG**



Stopping SiriusXM Radio from trapping subscribers

Hundreds of subscribers of satellite radio SiriusXM complained that they were unable to easily cancel their subscriptions. When they called or went online to stop their service, customer representatives held them captive for lengthy periods of time— half an hour on average – as part of their attempt to cancel. During that time, the representatives pestered customers with numerous questions, long chats, and unwanted offers to continue the service. Many subscribers would simply give up trying to cancel. In December, Attorney General James sued SiriusXM for not allowing consumers to cancel in a simple way and for engaging in deception and fraud. She wants the company to compensate the subscribers for their unwanted subscriptions, including the time they wasted trying to cancel their service, and to pay penalties for their deceptive practices.

TIMES UNION

SiriusXM sued by N.Y. attorney
general for onerous
cancel policies

Newsday

SiriusXM Radio cancellation practices subject
of suit by NY Attorney General Letitia James

AP

New York sues SiriusXM, accusing company
of making it deliberately hard to cancel
subscriptions



In December, Attorney General James recovered more than \$740,000 from Cerebral, an online provider of mental health care, for putting subscribers through a long, difficult cancellation process. Customers were required to cancel their subscriptions by email, but they also had to take further steps and wait as long as a week for cancellation. Cerebral also continued to charge users after they tried to cancel, and would charge for services even when it had no providers available. The company also manipulated its online reviews by asking its own employees to submit positive reviews and hide negative reviews. Cerebral's deceptive and burdensome practices affected more than 16,500 consumers.

Ending a health care provider's difficult cancellation practices

In October, Attorney General James announced the guilty pleas and sentencing of individuals and companies who had been running a bid-rigging scheme for 20 years. The individuals and companies had submitted thousands of false, inflated bids for moving contracts with the New York State Office of Victim Services and the New York City Human Resources Administration. At times, the individuals charged the agencies up to three times the fair-market value for moving services. In defrauding the agencies, they stole funds intended to help public-benefits recipients, domestic-violence survivors, and other crime victims who urgently needed relocation services. To conceal their false bids, the bid riggers set up a complex scheme involving a fake trade association, a fake government agency, and even a sham organization for collecting kickbacks. They will now pay damages to the State and City of New York, and are also barred from doing any business with city agencies.

Stopping fraudulent contractors' fake bids

Attorney General James in the Community



In order to best stand up for New Yorkers and defend their rights, Attorney General James dedicates her time visiting vibrant communities of New York state. It is through her visits to family farms, marching in neighborhood parades, and tours of community health centers that is able to hear about the issues and challenges facing New Yorkers each and every day.

Attorney General James joined New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, State Senator Iwen Chu, and community leaders to help kick off the Lunar New Year Parade in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.



Attorney General James visited Penn Yan in July for a tour of Milly's Pantry, a Main Street building named in honor of the late Camilla "Milly" Bloomquist, a beloved Yates County resident who started and oversaw a number of programs that helped children in the county for decades.



Attorney General James visited Williams Park in Batavia for a Juneteenth celebration organized by the community group Just Kings.



Attorney General James attended July's Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Centennial Convention in Seneca Falls, and amplified calls to have the ERA enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.





Attorney General James paid a July visit to Rock Steady Farm, an LGBTQ-owned farm in Millerton.



Attorney General James, Manhattan's Borough President Mark Levine, and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson marched at the Celebrate Israel Parade, highlighting the strong bond between New York and Israel.



Over the course of the year, OAG hosted eight Smart Senior presentations and participated in six other presentations and community events in Manhattan.



On the one-year anniversary of the Tops grocery store shooting, Attorney General James joined grieving families in Buffalo to pay tribute to those who were murdered by a white supremacist.



Attorney General James marched in the Dominican Day Parade in Midtown in August.



Attorney General James attended the Sandwip Society dinner celebration in Brooklyn.



In July, Attorney General James visited Ithaca as a part of the “AG in Your Community” initiative, inviting community members to talk to her about hot button topics like housing, employee wages, and consumer fraud.



In August, New York Attorney General Letitia James, joined by New York State Fair Director Sean Hennessy, enjoyed walking around the Great New York State Fair in Syracuse.



About the Office



As head of the Department of Law, the Attorney General is both the “People’s Lawyer” and the state’s chief legal officer. The Attorney General serves as the guardian of the legal rights of the people of New York, its organizations, and its natural resources. Additionally, the Attorney General advises state agencies and defends actions and proceedings on behalf of the state.

The Attorney General’s Office serves all New Yorkers in numerous matters affecting their daily lives. The Attorney General’s Office protects consumers and investors, oversees charitable institutions, ensures public health and the health of the environment, and safeguards civil rights and the rights of workers and businesses across the state.

The legal functions of the Attorney General’s Office are divided primarily into five major divisions: Appeals and Opinions, State Counsel, Criminal Justice, Economic Justice, and Social Justice.

The Attorney General’s Office has more than 1,700 employees located in 16 offices throughout the state.

2023
**Year in
Review**



Office of the New York State Attorney General
Letitia James