



YEAR IN REVIEW

2021

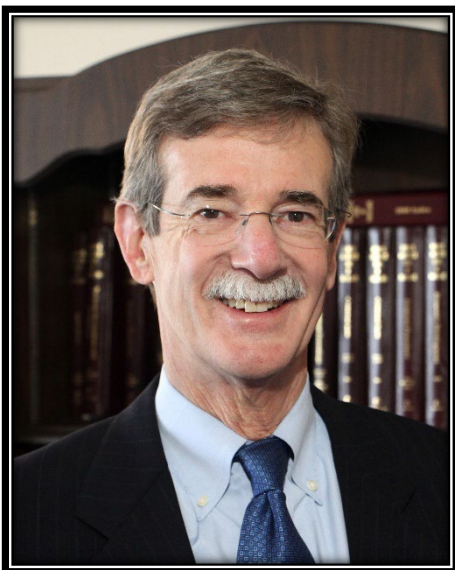
Maryland Office of the Attorney General Year in Review 2021

2021 was another productive year for the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, despite the tremendous challenges presented by the protracted global COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. While continuing to combat fraud and abuse, fight for justice and civil rights, and safeguard Maryland's natural resources, our office also continued to help Marylanders who have been impacted by the pandemic. Economic upheaval, job loss, illness, debt, difficulty in obtaining unemployment benefits, and other significant hardships created a myriad of challenges, including loss of housing. For much of 2021, there were protections in place to prevent families losing their homes through eviction. However, those protections expired in August, putting thousands of Marylanders at risk. In response to this crisis, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB18, which established statewide access to counsel in eviction proceedings for income-eligible tenants and the [Attorney General's Access to Counsel in Evictions Task Force](#).

Other significant actions in 2021 comprised the creation of the Independent Investigations Division, multiple criminal indictments for organized crime, a U.S. Department of Justice grant to address hate crimes, lawsuits against corporate giants like Monsanto and Google, and much more. As always, our attorneys represented a broad range of clients with professionalism and skill, working diligently on behalf of all Marylanders.

I am pleased to provide this summary of initiatives, litigation and other accomplishments that represent our most notable achievements of the past calendar year.

I remain honored to serve as Maryland's Attorney General and am working tirelessly to uphold the fine traditions of this office.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian E. Frosh". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Brian E. Frosh

Maryland Attorney General

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Major Initiatives

The COVID-19 Global Pandemic

COVID-Related Scams and Fraud

Scammers and fraudsters continue to take advantage of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic to prey on consumer's fears about the coronavirus. They steal money, personal information, and even identities from Marylanders. To combat this scourge, Attorney General Frosh joined U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen in two virtual forums in 2021 to discuss consumer education including spotting and avoiding COVID scams.

In addition, the Attorney General appeared with Howard County Executive Calvin Ball in March to discuss COVID scams and other consumer protection measures taken by the OAG.

Combatting COVID-Related Price Gouging

Under the Governor's Order prohibiting price-gouging in Maryland, which expired on April 30, 2021, retailers who engaged in price-gouging were in violation of the Consumer Protection Act. They could have faced civil penalties or even criminal prosecution for violations. Despite the expiration of the Order, the Consumer Protection Division continues to receive reports of price-gouging. Our office tracks these complaints so we may keep the Governor

and the legislature aware of continued concerns of price-gouging throughout the pandemic.

Worker Protections During COVID

In April, the Attorney General co-lead a multi-state coalition of 19 attorneys general in an amicus brief pushing back on Tyson Foods' efforts to avoid state court review of its handling of a COVID-19 outbreak at its plant in Waterloo, Iowa, the largest pork-processing facility in the country. The coalition filed the brief in the consolidated cases of *Buljic v. Tyson Foods* and *Hernandez v. Tyson Foods*, lawsuits brought on behalf of several Tyson employees who died from COVID complications following an outbreak at the Waterloo plant, urging the U. S. Court of appeals to send the cases back to state court for review. The coalition opposed Tyson's assertion that it was entitled to have the cases heard in federal court – because the company claimed it was acting at the federal government's direction in keeping its meatpacking plants open – and also claimed that allowing the cases to avoid state court review would set a dangerous precedent for private companies to avoid complying with state law.

Maryland's interest in the cases stems from the potential for severe COVID outbreaks at meatpacking and processing plants, which then spread to their neighboring communities. In Maryland, communities on the Eastern Shore have been heavily impacted by outbreaks, with hundreds of cases of COVID linked to poultry workers in the state.

Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force

On January 11, 2021, Attorney General Frosh released the final report of his COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force. The report, [Confronting the COVID-19 Access to Justice Crisis](#), is the culmination of six months of work by members of the task force, and includes 59 significant legislative and policy recommendations to help Marylanders recover from the devastating impact of COVID-19.

Creation of the Access to Counsel Task Force

During the 2021 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 18, creating the nation's second statewide access to counsel in evictions program and also creating the Access to Counsel in Evictions Task Force. The program, which will be administered by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, provides low-income Marylanders who are facing eviction with legal representation in the courts. The program is expected to be fully implemented by October 2025.

The Access to Counsel Task force is required to:

- Evaluate the services provided through the program;
- Study potential funding sources; and
- Make recommendations to improve the implementation of the program, including necessary policy and statutory changes.

A report from the Task Force outlining recommendations on funding and implementing the program will be released in early 2022.

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic

Settlement with McKinsey & Company for Unfair Opioid Marketing

In February, the OAG entered into a multimillion-dollar settlement with global consulting firm McKinsey & Company to resolve opioid-related consumer protection charges arising from McKinsey's role in developing marketing plans for pharmaceutical companies that contributed to the nation's opioid crisis. The \$573 million settlement includes more than \$12 million to be used for abatement of the opioids epidemic in Maryland.

The settlement bars McKinsey from advising opioids and other narcotic manufacturers in the future and calls for McKinsey to turn over tens of thousands of internal documents related to opioids manufacturers for public disclosure online, adopt a strict document retention plan, continue its investigation into allegations that two of its partners tried to destroy documents, and implement a strict ethics code that all partners must agree to each year.

Settlement with Johnson & Johnson and Opioids Distributors

Two multistate settlements were undertaken in February – one with the three largest distributors of opioid medications, McKesson, Amer-

iSourceBergen, and Cardinal Health (the distributors), and a separate settlement with Johnson & Johnson.

The coalition of states alleged that the three opioid distributors failed for years to monitor and report suspicious orders of opioid products, which resulted in diversion of those drugs on a massive scale. Separately the coalition alleged that Johnson & Johnson deceptively marketed its fentanyl products to healthcare providers and patients.

McKesson, AmeriSourceBergen, and Cardinal Health could pay Maryland and its subdivisions up to \$411.17 million, while Johnson & Johnson could pay up to \$91.6 million. The distributors will also adopt extensive monitoring and reporting programs to address suspicious orders and diversion of opioids, and Johnson & Johnson will cease its sale of opioids.

Appeal of Court Decision in Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy

In May 2019, the OAG filed charges against the owners and former directors of Purdue Pharma for allegedly engaging in a pattern of deceptive conduct that encouraged the inappropriate use of opioids for patients who suffer from common chronic pain conditions, helping fuel the nation's opioid crisis. However, Purdue Pharma filed for bankruptcy immediately prior to the scheduled trial date, resulting in a stay of the OAG's case.

The United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York confirmed Purdue's bankruptcy plan, which resolved Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy by forcing the State of

Maryland to release billions of dollars in legal claims against members of the Sackler family, owners of Purdue Pharma, in exchange for only a fraction of their value.

On September 16, the OAG appealed the court's decision. The settlement was insufficient, the OAG argued, to deter future wrongdoing, especially because it allows members of the Sackler family and others to retain billions of dollars from wrongdoing that injured millions of Americans.

In December, a federal judge overturned the releases of the State of Maryland's opioid-related police power claims against members of the Sackler family, restoring the State's ability to protect the safety of Marylanders by holding fully accountable those who created or contributed to the opioid crisis, particularly members of the Sackler family.

Charging Alleged Pill Mill Operators

Aloysius Ikuni Okei was charged in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County on May 27 with Medicaid fraud, theft, and 239 counts of distribution of a controlled dangerous substance. Okei, a licensed pharmacist, owned and operated Family Choice Pharmacy, Inc. The OAG alleged that beginning in October 2013 and continuing into 2021, Okei knowingly filled fraudulent prescriptions and dispensed controlled dangerous substances, including oxycodone and alprazolam, to customers who presented the fraudulent prescriptions, many of whom were Medicaid recipients. Okei would at times submit claims for payment to Medicaid for filling the fraudulent prescrip-

tions, and would also take cash from the customers, sometimes as much as \$450 for filling those prescriptions, even though the cost of the medication was covered by Medicaid. A trial in Okei's case is scheduled for March 1, 2022.

Separately, Reggie Eugene Hall was charged with 50 counts of passing false prescriptions for controlled dangerous substances with the intent to distribute, and was alleged to have presented fraudulent prescriptions in his own name and in the name of others to Okei. Hall pleaded guilty to three counts of Passing False Prescription, CDS, with Intent to Distribute, and sentencing is set for March 25, 2022.

Medicaid Fraud Control Unit

The OAG's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit is prosecuting the case of Vitalis Ohakwe Ojiegbe, a physician specializing in internal medicine, who owned and operated Sunrise Medical Clinic. The OAG alleged that beginning in January 2013 and continuing through June 9, 2019, Ojiegbe charged \$200 to his patients, many of whom were Medicaid recipients, for monthly medical appointments, even though the patients could have seen a Medicaid provider free of charge. At the medical appointments, Ojiegbe prescribed controlled dangerous substances, including oxycodone and alprazolam, without a legitimate medical purpose. Ojiegbe's patients, many of whom were his patients when he was previously a Medicaid provider, used Medicaid to pay for the illegitimate prescriptions.

Trial for this case has been scheduled for August 8, 2022.

Health Occupations Prosecution and Litigation

The Health Occupations Prosecution and Litigation Unit (HOPL) prosecutors investigate and prosecute health occupation licensees—including physicians, physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, podiatrists, and nurses—who prescribe or divert opioids for illegitimate reasons. These prosecutions have included pain management clinics in which prescribers' licenses have been revoked or suspended. HOPL prosecutors also work with the boards to support the rehabilitation of licensees who themselves abuse opioid medications, and they are involved in the efforts of the OAG's Task Force on Crimes of Exploitation to prosecute providers exploiting patients through inappropriate prescribing.

Agency Support

Many Assistant Attorneys General at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) provide advice and support to the MDH units working to address the opioid crisis. They provide legal advice regarding the legal sufficiency of proposed legislation, the sharing of patient data regarding opioid use, treatment, overdoses, and other aspects of the pandemic. They advise the Board of Pharmacy, the Office of Controlled Substance Administration, and the Behavioral Health Administration regarding licensing and regulatory issues related to opioids and substance use disorder treatment, and represent those units in actions enforcing those regulations. Assistant Attorneys General at MDH also advise Medicaid about coverage of addiction treatment services and the investigation and defense of Medicaid payment suspensions

for fraud related to opioid use and prescribing. They also provide advice and support to many other MDH units including the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, the Opioid Operations Command Center, health occupational licensing boards, and the 23 county health departments.

The OAG's advice on opioid-related issues involves all or almost all of our client agencies.

OAG Professional Development

In support of all of these efforts, we have created an Opioid Work Group to provide training for our lawyers on opioid-related issues and to provide a forum for our lawyers to share information about the issues they are confronting. Many of our attorneys also have participated in multi-day opioid training seminars sponsored by the National Association of Attorneys General.

Victory in Lawsuit Combatting Federal Efforts to Cut Food Assistance

In January 2020, Attorney General Frosh joined a multistate coalition in suing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to challenge a new rule that would have severely limited states' flexibility to provide food assistance to individuals struggling to find work. Siding with the coalition, Chief Judge Beryl Howell of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia temporarily halted parts of the rule in March 2020, and in October she struck down the rule in its entirety, protecting

access to SNAP benefits for Maryland residents who rely on the program. The Department of Justice (DOJ) initially appealed that decision.

In March, the DOJ asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to dismiss the appeal. As a result, Chief Judge Howell's decision striking down the rule is final, and the cuts will not go into effect.

Fighting for Victims of Sexual Assault

In 2017, the General Assembly passed legislation creating the Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee (SAEK Committee or Committee). The Committee was established to create uniform statewide policies regarding the collection, testing, and retention of sexual assault evidence kits (SAEKs) and increase access to justice for sexual assault victims. Chaired by Attorney General Frosh, the Committee consists of a board cross-section of stakeholders including law enforcement, medical professionals, crime victim rights attorneys, victim advocates, prosecutors, agency officials, and legislators.

Since its inception, the SAEK Committee has led the effort to produce statewide SAEK reform in Maryland. The Committee's advocacy has helped the State to: establish a 20-year SAEK retention requirement; create a uniform statewide testing criteria; develop a process to review law enforcement decisions not to test a kit; provide victims with HIV prophylaxis free of charge; secure a \$2.6 million Sexual Assault

Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant; and promote transparency by establishing annual reporting by law enforcement.

In 2021, the Committee worked to achieve uniform statewide implementation of these recent SAEK advancements. The Committee hosted a two-day training for law enforcement agencies and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs); facilitated the collection of the annual law enforcement agency and forensic lab reports; published guidance on investigating Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) hits and cold cases; and helped the Governor's Office implement the HIV non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis (nPEP) Program—a three-year pilot program established by the General Assembly to monitor and provide HIV prevention medication to sexual assault victims free of charge..

Additionally, the SAEK Committee continued to fulfill its obligations under the FY2018 SAKI grant and secured additional SAKI grant funding. In 2018, the Committee was awarded 2.6 million to conduct an inventory of Maryland's untested kits; test a portion of the state's untested kits; establish a statewide tracking system; and provide victim services. In December 2021, Maryland was awarded another \$2.5 million in SAKI grant funds. In addition to continuing efforts under the previous grant, the FY2021 grant funding will be used to hire investigators to support local law enforcement agencies and hire a Violent Criminal Apprehension Program/CODIS Hit Coordinator.

Lastly, the SAEK Committee developed new recommendations and a plan of action for

2022. Specifically, the SAEK Committee recommended that the General Assembly extend the 3-year HIV nPEP Pilot Program and evaluate the current status of the Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund—a State grant program to annually fund SAEK testing infrastructure.

In 2022, the SAEK Committee will continue its efforts to advance both SAKI grants, produce statewide SAEK policy reform by hosting a dialogue series for sexual assault practitioners, establish the statewide tracking system, and advance previous recommendations.

Legislative Victories

Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force Legislative Recommendations

The Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force was launched in June 2020 with the goal of ensuring that when Marylanders encounter the civil legal system, justice is accessible, fair and equitable. Equitable access to the civil justice system will protect public health, spur economic recovery and growth, and reduce further harms to the most vulnerable.

For many Marylanders, particularly those in low income and communities of color, the COVID pandemic exposed and exacerbated challenges in obtaining access to justice on a scale and magnitude not encountered before. The economic upheaval caused by business

closures and illness created significant hardships that only the civil justice system could resolve, like missed rent payments leading to eviction notices; disputes over medical or consumer debt; or people wrongfully denied public benefits necessary to keep families afloat. Even after the pandemic ends, many people will be left to navigate on their own the complicated civil justice landscape.

The Task Force brought together high-level and diverse leaders with expertise in a myriad of sectors including health, disaster recovery, business, government, housing, and many others to confront these new challenges and plan for the post-COVID landscape. The Task Force maintained five major focus areas during its tenure: keep Marylanders housed, fed, safe, secure, and connected.

The Task Force's final report with their recommendations was released in January 2021. Several of these recommendations were adopted into legislation by the Maryland General Assembly during its 2021 session, including:

- Dedicated funding of \$6 million annually to Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) – a provider of funds to organizations that provide civil legal services to low-income Marylanders;
- Initiatives designed to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities in Maryland, including establishing a State Commission on Health Equity to advise the Maryland Department of Health on issues of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic health disparities, and make recommendations on advancing health equity; targeting State

resources to areas of the State that experience measurable and documented health disparities and poor outcomes; enhancing the collection and publication of health data by race and ethnicity; and requiring applicants for health occupations licenses and certificates to participate in implicit bias training programs before renewal;

- Legislation that will require landlords to provide 10-day written notice before filing an eviction complaint; and
- Legislation that will provide essential workers with benefits and protections during a catastrophic health emergency, and will require employers to maintain safe working conditions and provide necessary safety equipment at no cost to the employee.

Policy and Enforcement Priorities

Public Safety

There are few priorities greater than the safety of Maryland residents. The OAG has continued to focus its resources strategically to build safer streets and communities.

Indictment of Multiple Members of “39 Babies” Gang

In August, 11 members of a gang masquerading as a rap group, and self-dubbed the “39 Babies,” were indicted for multiple charges, including participation in a criminal gang, first

degree murder, assault, and firearm-related counts. The investigation was led by the OAG, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Baltimore Police Department.

The investigation into the criminal organization began as a result of the February 12, 2020, attempted murder of Perry Wainwright and homicide of Deonte Henderson, who was shot and killed in 600 block of Wyanoke Avenue in Baltimore City. Ballistics evidence revealed that the firearms used to kill Henderson and shoot Wainwright were linked through the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network to multiple incidents including homicides, non-fatal shootings, firearm dischargings, carjackings, and other violent crimes.

A long-term investigation revealed that the criminal organization conducted several retaliatory shootings including the December 2019 murder of 17-year-old London Stuckey in the 5600 block of Woodmont Avenue in Baltimore City; the July 2020 murder of Kyon Thomas in the 500 block of Sheridan Avenue in Baltimore City; the August 2020 murder of Andrew Frazier in the 900 block of Tunbridge Road in Baltimore City; eight attempted murders; discussed multiple murder-for-hire plots; illegally possessed and distributed drugs, mainly cocaine; and illegally possessed, sold, and traded firearms within and outside of their organization in Baltimore City. The organization utilized threats and violence to control their territory and to punish adversaries. Members possessed firearms to protect their organization and their drug distribution territory.

All but one of the indicted individuals are in custody; one 19-year-old defendant remains at large.

Indictments of Individuals for Criminal Organization, Firearm, and Illegal Drug Offenses

Fifteen members of an organized criminal and illegal drug organization were indicted in May for multiple charges. Seven of the defendants were charged with participation in a criminal organization, assault, and conspiracy to distribute drugs, and firearm-related counts, and eight defendants were charged with drug and firearm-related counts.

The investigation was led by the OAG and the Anne Arundel Police Department in coordination with the Anne Arundel County State's Attorney's Office. The investigation into the drug-trafficking organization began as a result of the November 18, 2019 homicide of Xavier Green, later identified as a member of a drug-trafficking organization. A long-term investigation revealed that the criminal organization distributed drugs, mainly marijuana and oxycodone, on a nearly daily basis to customers in and around the Morris Hill community in Anne Arundel as well as in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The organization utilized threats and violence to control their territory and to punish adversaries or even their own members.

A total of six firearms were recovered during the investigation along with ammunition, approximately 15 pounds of marijuana, 167 grams of cocaine, 270 grams of oxycodone, as well as Morphine and Tramadol.

Indictments in Inmate Contraband Smuggling Scheme

Thirteen individuals who participated in several smuggling schemes in the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women (MCIW) were indicted in April. Charges in the indictments cover five different smuggling attempts, including one that involved a DPSCS dietary sergeant. The investigation was led by the OAG and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

The investigation revealed that between June 2020 and February 2021, 6 inmates and 7 outside facilitators worked together to introduce large amounts of suboxone strips into MCIW. In total, approximately \$140,000 – \$280,000 worth of Suboxone strips were recovered during the course of the investigation.

Conviction of Malik Mungo

Malik Mungo, 21, of Baltimore, was convicted in October for the June 2017 robbery and murder of Sebastian Dvorak, as well as gang-related charges. Dvorak was robbed and killed on June 13, 2017, on Boston Street in the Canton neighborhood of Baltimore City while walking home from a night of celebrating his 27th birthday. The jury convicted Mungo of first-degree felony murder, robbery, gang participation resulting in death, gang participation, and conspiring to participate in a gang.

During an earlier trial in this case, Mungo was convicted of drug and firearm offenses, including drug distribution, and illegal possession of a regulated firearm. Mungo was indicted along with 12 co-defendants in August of 2018 for

gang, drug, and gun offenses in addition to the robbery and murder of Dvorak. Mungo's conviction marks the end of the case, with all 13 defendants having either pleaded guilty or having been convicted at trial. Additionally, in early 2020, Mungo's accomplice was identified, apprehended, and convicted of his involvement in Dvorak's murder.

Guilty Plea of Gang Leader and Associate to Drug Distribution and Sex Trafficking

Gang leader David Tico Brown, 45, and his close associate Michael Anthony Copeland, 42, pleaded guilty in October to multiple offenses for their role in the "Brown Drug Trafficking Organization." The gang engaged in the distribution of numerous controlled dangerous substances, including cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine and marijuana in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County and Baltimore City. The leaders of the gang also engaged in sex trafficking of numerous women.

The investigation was led by the OAG and the Anne Arundel County Police Department. Upon the arrests of David Brown, Michael Copeland and other indicted members of the organization, detectives located and seized 2 assault rifles and 7 handguns, as well as 502 grams of crack cocaine, 119 grams of powder cocaine, over 3000 grams of marijuana, over 200 grams of heroin/fentanyl, 38 grams of MDMA, 1,316 grams of methamphetamine, and 13 strips of suboxone in addition to \$27,000 in cash.

Brown and Copeland have both been sentenced to decades in prison for their crimes.

Former BCCC Professor Sentenced for Bribery and Misconduct

Edward Ennels, a former professor of Mathematics at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) and president of the BCCC faculty senate, pleaded guilty in August to charges of bribery and misconduct in office before the Circuit Court for Baltimore County.

From March 2020 to December 2020, Ennels solicited and received bribes from his students at BCCC in exchange for favorable final grades in courses he taught. Between June 2020 and December 2020, Ennels received 10 bribes totaling \$2,815 paid by 9 students.

In addition to the bribery scheme, Ennels used his official position to promote several vendors selling the academic access codes required by BCCC students to view instructional materials and to complete assignments. In fact, each of the “vendors” was Ennels, having gone through elaborate lengths to conceal his identity. In violation of BCCC’s ethical rules, from August 2013 to February 2020, Ennels sold at least 694 access codes, for approximately \$90 each.

Ennels was sentenced to 10 years’ incarceration, 9 years suspended, followed by five years of supervised probation upon release, and restitution of \$60,000.

Fighting to Prohibit Distribution of 3D Printed Gun Files on the Internet

In an amicus brief supporting the petitioner in the case *Grenal v. Defense Distributed* before the U.S. Supreme Court, the OAG, as part of a

multistate coalition, sought to protect states’ efforts to stop Defense Distributed from unlawfully publishing easily-downloadable files on the internet that provide the instructions to build dangerous 3D-printed firearms, including assault weapons.

Creation of the Independent Investigations Division

The Independent Investigations Division was established after passage of a package of police reform bills during the 2021 General Assembly session. The Division is charged with investigating all alleged or potential police-involved deaths of civilians, and to provide a report containing detailed investigative findings to the State’s Attorney of the County that has jurisdiction.

From July until December, the new unit opened seven investigations into civilian deaths in which there was some level of police involvement.

Standing Up for Consumers

Protecting Marylanders from fraud and deceptive business practices is an essential function of the OAG. Every day Marylanders face challenges and have questions about transactions that are part of daily life. They may sign up for phone service that doesn’t work the way it was promised or have trouble getting a warranty repair or a medical bill paid by their insurance companies.

The OAG is prepared to help. In FY 2021, the Consumer Protection Division (CPD), which includes the Health Education and Advocacy

Unit, assisted over 10,000 consumers who filed complaints, reclaiming more than \$4 million for them.

In addition to individual claims, the office undertakes major investigations and participates in litigation with successful outcomes for Marylanders. Here are some of the major cases from 2021.

Shutting Down Fraudulent Charities

In January, the OAG, with ten other states, settled with Florida-based veterans' charity Healing Heroes Network, Inc. and its former directors, Stacey Spiegel, Allan Spiegel and Neal Spiegel, as well as Hero Giveaways, LLC, a business formed by the Spiegels.

Healing Heroes Network, Inc. was the subject of a multistate investigation into its use of deceptive charitable solicitations including misleading sweepstakes mailers and a telemarketing campaign. The investigation revealed that Maryland donors contributed an estimated \$146,576 between 2014 and 2018 as a result of deceptive sweepstakes mailers and telephone solicitations. The charitable contributions received by the Healing Heroes Network, Inc. were not used to further its charitable mission, but instead used to pay professional fundraisers, on-line advertising fees, salaries (including to Stacey Spiegel's son, Neal Spiegel) and to purchase t-shirts from another family member's t-shirt business.

The settlement requires Healing Heroes Network, Inc. and Hero Giveaways, LLC to permanently cease all charitable solicitations, and the Spiegels have agreed to pay \$95,000. The

money will go to a veterans' charity whose mission matches the representations made by Healing Heroes. Stacey Spiegel, Allan Spiegel and Neal Spiegel are also subject to a five-year ban from overseeing, managing, or soliciting charitable contributions for any nonprofit organization.

Then in March, Attorney General Frosh and Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith, announced that Maryland, as part of a coalition of 38 states and the District of Columbia, shut down a massive telefunding operation that bombarded 67 million consumers with 1.3 billion deceptive charitable fundraising calls. The defendants collected more than \$110 million using their deceptive solicitations. Associated Community Services (ACS) and a number of related defendants agreed to settle charges by the FTC and state agencies that they duped consumers into donating to charities that failed to provide the services they promised.

According to the complaint, the defendants knew that the organizations for which they were fundraising spent little or no money on the charitable causes they claimed to support - in some cases as little as one-tenth of one percent. The defendants kept as much as 90 cents of every dollar they solicited from donors on behalf of the charities. The complaint also charges ACS with making harassing calls, noting that ACS called more than 1.3 million phone numbers more than 10 times in a single week and 7.8 million numbers more than twice in an hour. More than 500 phone numbers were called 5,000 times or more. ACS is alleged to have placed more than 45 million calls to Maryland residents between 2016 and 2019.

Per the settlement, the ACS and other defendants are permanently prohibited from conducting or consulting on any fundraising activities and from conducting telemarketing of any kind to sell goods or services, additional injunctions, and were subject to monetary judgments.

Settlement with American Medical Collection Agency over Data Breach

Maryland, as part of a coalition of 41 attorneys general, reached a settlement in March with debt collection agency Retrieval-Masters Creditors Bureau, d/b/a American Medical Collection Agency, resolving a multistate investigation into the 2019 data breach that exposed the personal information of over 7 million individuals, including 285,108 Maryland residents, and potentially exposed the personal information of up to 21 million individuals throughout the United States.

Under the terms of the settlement, AMCA and its principals have agreed to implement and maintain a series of data security practices designed to strengthen its information security program and safeguard the personal information of consumers.

Charges Against and Settlement with National Tax Experts, Inc.

Charges were filed against tax debt relief company National Tax Experts, Inc., in March that alleged the company mailed misleading advertisements to Maryland consumers that threatened them with bank account seizures or other collection actions unless the consumer immediately called a toll-free number that connected them to National Tax Experts, and also failed

to provide the promised tax debt relief services for many of the Maryland consumers that hired the company, charged Maryland consumers prohibited advance fees, engaged in credit services business activities without being duly licensed by the State, engaged in debt settlement services without being properly registered with the State, and engaged in various other activities that constitute unfair or deceptive trade practices and are prohibited by the Maryland Consumer Protection Act.

To resolve these allegations, National Tax Experts agreed to a settlement in July that provides restitution to Maryland consumers, imposes civil penalties, and permanently bans the company from providing tax debt relief services to Maryland consumers.

Settlement with Medical Device Manufacturer Boston Scientific Corporation

The OAG entered into a multistate settlement with Boston Scientific Corporation in March to resolve allegations of deceptive marketing of its surgical mesh products for women. The settlement requires Boston to pay \$188.6 million to 47 states and the District of Columbia to resolve allegations that it deceptively marketed transvaginal surgical mesh devices. Maryland's share of the settlement is \$5,620,634.

The complaint against Boston Scientific Corporation alleged the company misrepresented the safety of its transvaginal surgical mesh devices by failing to disclose the full range of potential serious and irreversible complications

caused by mesh, including chronic pain, voiding dysfunction, and new onset of incontinence.

Under the settlement, Boston Scientific Corporation must disclose risks in its marketing materials, provide training for health care providers that includes information on significant complications and inherent mesh risks, and reform how it presents clinical information and information on clinical studies.

Charges Against Debt Consolidation Service for Defrauding Consumers

Marcia L. Bailey and Arthur Wittenberg, along with their entities Marcia Bailey Inc. trading as Signature Accounting, and the Wittenberg Family Trust, a Baltimore-based operation that offers and sells debt consolidation services to consumers in Maryland and other states, were charged with defrauding their customers in May. According to the charges, Bailey, Wittenberg, and their entities collected upfront fees from consumers as high as \$49,000 and promising to consolidate and settle their debts, but rather than transmitting consumers' payments to creditors to pay off the consumers' debts, Bailey and Wittenberg pocket the money for their own personal use, resulting in defaulted consumer loans.

This case is set to go on trial in January 2022.

Charges Against Two Retail Pet Stores

In June, charges were filed against Just Puppies of Maryland, Inc. and Just Puppies, Inc. (Just Puppies), two retail pet stores in Rockville and

Towson respectively, that sell puppies to consumers in Maryland, as well as against the stores' owner, Mitchell Thomson. Just Puppies was charged with selling puppies to consumers in violation of the No More Puppy-Mills Act and the Consumer Protection Act.

The Consumer Protection Division alleged that although Just Puppies shifted to an appointment-only model in February 2020, it continued to sell puppies to consumers even after the No More Puppy-Mills Act's effective date, and misled consumers about its relationship with the sources of some of the puppies it sold. The Division sought an injunction, as well as monetary relief for restitution, penalties, and the costs of the action.

To resolve the allegations, the Division settled with Just Puppies and Mitchell in October. The settlement prevents Just Puppies from selling dogs in Maryland, provides restitution to Maryland consumers who purchased puppies that had a congenital disorder or hereditary condition or illness at the time of purchase, and imposes a civil penalty up to \$500,000.

Settlement with Ticket Resale Marketplace StubHub, Inc.

The Consumer Protection Division reached a settlement with California-based StubHub, Inc. over the company's refusal to pay refunds to consumers for concerts, sports events, and other events that were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Maryland led an investigation that included nine other states and the District of Columbia in a multistate resolution with the company.

Under its own policy, StubHub had been offering consumers full refunds of the purchase price and fees they paid for tickets if their events were cancelled. However, in March 2020, following the mass-cancellation of entertainment events, StubHub stopped honoring its refund guarantee and instead told its customers that they would receive account credits equal to 120% of their purchases to be used for future events and denied their requests for refunds. Once an investigation was launched, StubHub reversed its decision and notified its customers that if they purchased tickets prior to March 25, 2020, and their events were cancelled, they would receive full refunds of the amounts they paid for their tickets to events unless they elected to retain their account credits. This included more than 8,500 consumers residing in Maryland or purchasing tickets for an event in Maryland.

The settlement requires StubHub to honor its refund policies, not change its refund policies for purchased tickets unless the purchasing consumer consents to the change, and promptly process refund requests it receives from consumers for the events at issue going forward.

OAG Prevails in Case Against AT&T and Cricket Wireless

Cricket Wireless, LLC and AT&T, Inc. were found to have deceived consumers into buying cell phones that the companies planned to stop servicing shortly after they were sold. AT&T and Cricket's actions violated Maryland's Consumer Protection Act, and as a result, the com-

panies have been ordered to pay back consumers who bought the phones and to pay a penalty of \$3,250,000.00 for their violations.

After AT&T announced its plan to merge with Cricket in 2013, Cricket failed to inform consumers that after the planned merger, the phones sold would no longer work on Cricket's network. In most cases, Cricket and AT&T did not provide consumers with any warning that the phones they were buying could stop working. Even when the companies finally included a warning, the tiny, fine print disclosures were unclear, inconspicuous, and not intended to actually put consumers on notice. As a result, consumers bought phones without knowing that in a matter of months the phones could become expensive paperweights, and that they would have to buy replacement phones if they wanted to continue receiving service.

As a result of their deceptive practices, AT&T and Cricket have been ordered to pay restitution for all Marylanders who purchased the affected phones, to the extent the consumers have not already received a full refund or a free replacement phone.

In addition to paying restitution and the penalty for their violations of Maryland's Consumer Protection Act, AT&T and Cricket must to pay the costs of the OAG's investigation.

Fighting for Equal Access to Healthcare

Protecting Reproductive Rights

In September, The Texas legislature passed the most restrictive ban on abortion in the nation,

Senate Bill 8. The law further utilizes a private enforcement mechanism that requires courts to provide monetary and injunctive relief to claimants who bring cases against doctors who provide abortions and those who “aid and abet” such constitutionally protected care. In short, Senate Bill 8 provides a financial motive for anyone – even if they are unconnected to the abortion seeker or provider – to sue for “damages” if an individual exercises their constitutional right to an abortion.

The U.S. Department of Justice challenged the unconstitutional ban, and the OAG subsequently joined a coalition of 24 attorneys general in filing an amicus brief in support of this challenge.

The brief, filed in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, argues that by banning nearly all pre-viability abortions within Texas’s borders, the law, Senate Bill 8, violates nearly 50 years of Supreme Court precedent affirming the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy before viability. The brief further contends that the Texas legislature sought to circumvent prior Supreme Court rulings and to prevent judicial review of the law by delegating enforcement authority to private individuals instead of the government, and, as such, Senate Bill 8 is an “unprecedented attack on our constitutional order” and the rule of law.

Standing Up for Civil Rights

Protecting Voting Rights

In February the OAG led a coalition of 21 attorneys general in sending a letter to Congressional leadership urging support for H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021. The bill is an omnibus package of democracy reforms designed to expand access to the ballot, protect elections from foreign interference, force disclosure of dark money in federal elections, and raise ethical standards for federal officials.

Despite confirmation that there was no evidence of widespread fraud or irregularity in the 2020 election, state legislators have seized upon baseless voter-fraud allegations to curtail mail-in voting options, impose stringent voter ID requirements, limit voter registration opportunities, and allow even more aggressive purging of voter rolls.

The Act included several measures that would neutralize efforts to suppress the vote by making it easier to vote, reducing the influence of dark money in elections, and codifying ethical standards for public servants. It would also have closed loopholes that allow the President and certain federal officials to evade accountability for personally profiting from their office. Passage of the Act was blocked by the U.S. Senate.

The OAG went on to support, by joining an amicus brief, three cases that challenged Florida’s restrictive voting law, SB 90, which, ac-

ording to the amici states, erected unconstitutional voting restrictions, especially against mail-in ballots.

The coalition of 17 attorneys general filed its brief in *Florida Rising Together v. Lee*; *Florida State Conference of Branches and Youth Units of the NAACP, Common Cause, and Disability Rights Florida v. Lee*; and *League of Women Voters of Florida v. Lee*.

The coalition further argued that Florida’s law, like others of its kind, has a discriminatory impact on minority voters. The coalition supported the plaintiffs’ arguments that SB 90 creates barriers to voting in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the right to vote as protected by the U.S. Constitution in the First, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments.

Department of Justice Grant to Address Hate Crimes

The OAG was awarded a three-year, multi-level Department of Justice (DOJ) grant totaling \$833,334 in November. The grant, issued through DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) will be used to fund a collaborative and comprehensive effort to address hate crimes statewide.

Since 2016, hate crimes and hate bias incidents have risen sharply nationwide. Maryland has seen a significant increase in hate crimes and bias incidents over the past five years, particularly in conduct motivated by bias against a victim’s race/ethnicity/ancestry, religion, and sexual orientation. According to the “State of Maryland 2020 Hate Bias Report,” there were a total of 382 hate bias incidents reported by

Maryland law enforcement agencies during the 2020 reporting period.

Despite recent enhancements to the State’s hate crime laws that expand protected categories and prohibited conduct, standardize reporting, and mandate law enforcement training, Maryland continues to face significant challenges in obtaining complete reporting, engaging law enforcement and community-based organizations in areas impacted by hate activity, and in securing justice for victims through prosecution.

Specifically, the DOJ grant will:

- Enhance community-based partnership by creating a Hate Crimes Task Force comprised of law enforcement, civil rights agencies and community-based organizations;
- Develop a statewide hate crime web portal;
- Conduct regional hate crime summits; and
- Train law enforcement and prosecutors.

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 2021, on behalf of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC), the OAG procured research historian, genealogical consultant, and social worker services to expand upon the existing research for all known and unknown racial terror lynchings in Maryland, provide trauma-informed assistance to community members impacted by these lynchings, and providing oral testimony in support of the Commission’s work.

The OAG also hired a Project Manager for the MLTRC grant, who has been focused on meeting regularly with local coalitions and other community stakeholders to develop the hearing schedule and agenda for public hearings.

The Commission, which is staffed by OAG, held its first public hearing on October 2, 2021, largely virtually, in Allegany County. For more information on the work of the Commission and the federal grant that supports it work, see msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/ and www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2020/102820.pdf.

Environmental Enforcement

Lawsuit Against Monsanto for Long-Lasting Harm from PCBs

A lawsuit was filed in November against the Monsanto Company for the harm that chemicals the company manufactured have caused, and continue to cause, to Maryland's land, waters, fish and wildlife. The lawsuit seeks to recover damages and clean-up costs associated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

PCBs were banned in 1979, but they continue to pollute Maryland's natural resources and waterways, including the Susquehanna River, Baltimore Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay, as well as fish and wildlife throughout the State. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are known to cause cancer in animals and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has concluded that they are probable human carcinogens. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry, PCB exposure can cause cancer, depressed

immune system function, skin conditions such as acne and rashes, irritation of the nose and lungs, gastrointestinal discomfort, changes in the blood and liver, depression, fatigue, and impaired learning capacity.

The suit alleges that Monsanto knew as early as 1937 that PCBs had systemic toxic effects in humans and animals, but continued to manufacture and sell PCBs, and increased their production even when the harm to the environment was undeniable. The State is seeking full responsibility from Monsanto for the harm it has caused.

Opposing Failure to Update NAAQS

With a coalition of 17 attorneys general and the city of New York, the OAG filed a lawsuit in January regarding the Trump administration's decision to leave current National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter pollution unchanged.

Particulate matter is a pollutant emitted from a variety of sources including vehicles, factories, and construction sites. Particulate matter exposure at the current standards causes up to 45,000 deaths per year nationwide and disproportionately impacts Maryland's most vulnerable populations. In addition, particulate matter is linked to increased mortality from COVID-19 and many other serious public health problems, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory impacts, and cancer.

Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA is required to set NAAQS for several pollutants, including particulate matter at a level that protects public health and welfare. The EPA is required to periodically review the standards and revise them

if new information shows that the existing standards are inadequate, and recent studies have made clear that exposure to particulate matter causes grievous health impacts, even at levels below the current standards.

In the lawsuit, the coalition argues that the EPA's decision to retain the current standards for particulate matter pollution was arbitrary and capricious because the EPA conducted a flawed and unlawfully biased review of the current NAAQS and available science clearly demonstrates the need for the EPA to strengthen NAAQS.

Currently, our case is being held in abeyance while EPA reconsiders the challenged rule.

Challenging Rule Blocking Regulation of GHG Emissions from Stationary Sources

Joining a coalition of 27 states and municipalities, the OAG filed a lawsuit in January challenging the Trump administration's final rule attempting to block future regulation of industries responsible for more than half of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from stationary sources, including the oil and gas industry.

The rule creates a new, arbitrary threshold to determine if an industry is a significant source of GHG emissions. If the industry emits less than 3% of total U.S. GHG emissions, the EPA claims it cannot be regulated under section 111 of the Clean Air Act. In promulgating the rule, which does not contain any emission standards, the EPA failed to provide public no-

tice that it would be replacing its past legal rationale for determining which sources "contribute significantly" to GHG pollution with an arbitrary 3% cutoff.

In April 2021, the D.C. Circuit granted EPA's motion for voluntary remand and vacatur of the rule, after the agency recognized that it had been unlawfully promulgated.

Settlement with Home Free Lead Inspections

The OAG entered into a settlement with Home Free Lead Inspections, LLC and two of its inspectors, Charles Gillis and David Gillis, resolving allegations that Home Free and the two inspectors failed to properly perform lead-based paint inspections, issued lead-free inspection certificates for properties that had not been thoroughly inspected, failed to provide notification prior to performing inspections, and failed to submit timely inspection certificates to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

In February 2020, the State filed suit against Home Free, Charles Gillis and David Gillis in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. As part of the settlement, Home Free agreed to a judgment of \$400,000, and David Gillis and Charles Gillis agreed to a judgment of \$95,000 collectively.

Settlement with Verso Luke LLC and Verso Corporation

The OAG intervened in a lawsuit on May 28, 2020, filed in the U.S. District Court for the

District of Maryland by the Environmental Integrity Project on behalf of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, which alleged that the release of pulping liquor at Luke Mill in Western Maryland created an imminent and substantial endangerment to the State under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The OAG alleged, in addition to the RCRA claim, violations of state environmental laws.

In April 2021, the OAG and the Maryland Department of the Environment settled with Verso Luke LLC and its parent company, Verso Corporation, owners of the Luke Paper Mill, for the seepages into the North Branch Potomac River that threatened public health and the environment.

Under the terms of the settlement, Verso will be required to continue its investigation into the source of the seepages and the extent of the contamination. Verso is also required to permanently stop the discharge and remediate the contaminated site and to pay a civil penalty of \$650,000, reimburse the State's attorneys' fees, and pay past and future costs to the State for the oversight of the investigation and remediation.

Settlement with U.S. EPA Requiring Asbestos Reporting by Chemical Industry

A settlement was reached in June with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requiring the chemical industry to provide the agency with information about the use and importation of asbestos needed to protect the

public from the serious health risks posed by the exposure of highly toxic asbestos.

In January 2019, a coalition of attorneys general filed a petition with EPA under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) urging the agency to issue new regulations to provide data on the importation and use of asbestos in the United States. The EPA denied the states' petition and the multistate coalition, including Maryland, sued the agency in July 2019.

The settlement follows a December 2020 ruling from the United States District Court for the Northern District of California mandating EPA to impose the reporting requirements on the chemical industry. The settlement will compel EPA to issue the regulations sought in the attorneys general's petition, and will mark the first time a petition of this kind under TSCA has resulted in court-ordered rulemaking.

Letter to Governor Hogan: Maryland's Drinking Water Is at Risk

A December 1 letter from the OAG to Governor Larry Hogan warned that the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Water Supply Program (WSP) is dramatically understaffed—potentially risking the safety of Maryland's drinking water and the health and welfare of Marylanders.

A 2021 report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency raised multiple concerns, and specifically found that understaffing and underfunding of the WSP program called into question the adequacy of inspections of Maryland's drinking water systems. The report identified a "severe gap" between WSP's available

staffing and funding resources, and those that would be required to run the program.

The letter asks Governor Hogan to make public a resource investment plan that was due to the EPA for review and approval by October 2021.

Prosecutions by Environmental Crimes Unit

OAG's Environmental Crimes Unit prosecuted a case against Jack Reece LaForce, Jr., a Frederick-based business owner, which resulted in his guilty plea to four counts related to the excavation and disposal of solid waste at a rural residential property in Myersville and the resulting water pollution. LaForce was sentenced to 4 years' incarceration, all suspended; fines totaling \$80,000, suspending all but \$30,000 to be paid to the Maryland Clean Water Fund; approximately \$14,500 in restitution; and three years of probation.

LaForce previously owned and operated a fire and flood restoration business, Frederick Fire and Flood, Inc. that provided primarily insurance-funded fire and flood residential restoration services. Employees of the company, at the direction of LaForce, systematically excavated large pits at a residential property in Myersville and filled them with various solid wastes that included carpet and carpet padding, wood and burnt wood, trash bags of domestic waste, plastic sheeting, insulation, piping, books, papers, glass, furniture, plastic and metal objects, paint cans, wiring, mattresses and appliances. The illegal pits were then covered to hide the illegal disposal. The property was ultimately foreclosed and resold.

In a separate case, the Environmental Crimes Unit obtained a guilty plea from Sitaram Hospitality, LLC to two counts related to illicit discharges of sewage waste from a failed septic tank at a motel owned and operated by the company located in Delmar, Maryland.

During a 2019 inspection, a submersible pump was observed and recorded discharging untreated sewage from a damaged septic system directly onto the ground. An investigation revealed the system failed in March of 2018 and that Sitaram was aware of the failed tank and initially paid to have the sewage pumped and hauled. The frequency of pumping and hauling decreased significantly in September 2018. Investigation also revealed that the company was aware of the illegal pumps and hoses and illegal discharge of sewage by company employees.

Since discovery of the illegal discharging, the motel paid for and successfully completed a connection to the municipal sewer.

Labor Rights

In January, the OAG joined a multistate coalition in filing a lawsuit to stop a last-ditch effort by the Trump administration to allow employers to withhold tips from their employees. The lawsuit challenges a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) rule that unlawfully seeks to remove the limit on non-tipped work a tipped worker may complete and still receive only the tipped minimum wage, \$2.13 per hour federally and \$3.63 per hour in Maryland.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the federal law establishing a baseline of critical workplace protections, such as minimum wage and

overtime, permits employers to take a credit against their minimum wage obligations for the tips workers receive. For 30 years, USDOL regulations have capped the amount of non-tipped work a tipped worker may do at 20-percent, also referred to the “80/20 rule.”

The coalition asserted in its lawsuit that the rule contradicts the text and purpose of the FLSA, and that the USDOL violated the rulemaking process requirements, including failing to analyze the impact the rule would have on tipped workers. In addition, the rule fails to justify its departure from the longstanding 80/20 rule. The states argue that the rule will harm the states by reducing income tax revenue, increasing public benefits expenditures, and imposing administrative costs.

Antitrust

In July the OAG joined a coalition of 37 attorneys general in filing a lawsuit against Google LLC alleging exclusionary conduct relating to the Google Play Store for Android mobile devices and Google Billing. The States alleged Google uses its dominance to unfairly restrict competition with the Google Play Store, harming consumers by limiting choice and driving up app prices, and violating federal and state antitrust laws.

The attorneys general allege that Google engaged in the following conduct, all aimed at enhancing and protecting Google’s monopoly position over Android app distribution:

- Google imposes technical barriers that strongly discourage or effectively prevent third-party app developers from

distributing apps outside the Google Play Store.

- Google has not allowed Android to be “open source” for many years, effectively cutting off potential competition.
- Google’s required contracts hinders competition by forcing Google’s proprietary apps to be “pre-loaded” on essentially all devices designed to run on the Android OS, and requires that Google’s apps be given the most prominent placement on device home screens.
- Google “buys off” its potential competition in the market for app distribution.
- Google unlawfully forces app developers and app users alike to use Google’s payment processing service to process payments for in-app purchases of content consumed within the app.

Judicial Appointments



Two current or former OAG attorneys received the high honor of appointment to Maryland’s judiciary in 2021: Paul Cucuzzella, and Theresa Morse.

Commitment to our Community

Thurgood Marshall Program

In keeping with its commitment to provide superior legal representation, the OAG created the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program. Each year, the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program provides first and second year law students from historically under-represented populations the opportunity to serve an 8-week clerkship over the summer at the downtown Baltimore location of the Maryland OAG.

The program is a collaborative effort of the OAG, several local law firms, and area law schools designed to attract diverse law students who demonstrate exceptional leadership potential to the field of public service. The goal is to encourage these students to consider public sector service during their legal careers by providing them with an excellent summer clerkship that enhances their future employment opportunities.

Pro Bono Work

The quality and commitment of lawyers and staff in the OAG is impressive. With skills honed by years of education and practice, attorneys in the office undertake detailed research, write strong and compelling briefs and opinions, and find solutions to complex problems. But with the privilege of professionalism comes responsibility. A responsibility to give back to the community. A responsibility to make justice—and the legal system—accessible to all. That is why the OAG has a robust and growing pro bono program.

Individuals in need of legal help are matched with lawyers who can assist them with a variety of tasks. Our lawyers help children, the elderly, and many others in need. We are committed to making sure we give back to the community, both through our public service mission and in other ways.

There are a variety of ways in which OAG attorneys may perform pro bono services. The cases in which attorneys have volunteered include drafting simple wills, simple deeds, powers of attorney, advanced medical directives, and corporate charters and by-laws; staffing expungement, powers of attorney, and bankruptcy bypass clinics; and representing individuals with filing Chapter 7 bankruptcies, name changes, gender marker changes, adult guardianships, divorces not involving custody, asylum, and other cases. Our attorneys have also written or edited numerous articles for the People's Law Library.



Maryland Attorney General
Brian E. Frosh