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Michigan AG Nessel Files Suit Against Out-Of-State Company for Fraudulent Practices

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today announced her office has filed a lawsuit against St. Petersburg, Florida-based CA Certificate Service, doing business as MI Certificate Service, for allegedly deceptive solicitations targeting new Michigan businesses.

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division started receiving complaints from small business owners earlier this year. According to allegations in the lawsuit, MI Certificate Service is using fraudulent misrepresentations in mailings to new limited liability companies to sell Certificates of Good Standing for \$72.50. The lawsuit says the mailings make new business owners believe they must make the payment through a design intentionally resembling an official State form, and the use of a Lansing address for payments even though the company is in Florida. These optional certificates are available from the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for \$10.

The lawsuit was filed to protect the interests of Michigan's small businesses and seeks to stop the company's fraudulent practices and return the swindled funds to their owners.

"Businesses using fake documents that purport to be official State of Michigan forms is not only intentionally misleading, it's illegal," Nessel said. "Our office will not permit any business to take advantage of our residents. All companies that want to do business in Michigan will be held to the same laws and standards, regardless of where they are located."

Since January, Nessel's Consumer Protection Bureau has returned more than \$373,000 to Michiganders' pocketbooks. Those who believe they have been victimized by illegal business practices from a company are urged to report their concerns to mi.gov/agcomplaints.