

**ATTORNEY GENERAL CUOMO SHUTS DOWN THREE NEW YORK COMPANIES
PROVIDING FRAUDULENT LEGAL SERVICES TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES
ACROSS NYC AND LONG ISLAND**

*AG's Office Also Sues Three More Companies for Unlawfully Filing Immigration Petitions With
the Feds on Behalf of NYC Immigrants Seeking Legal Status*

Latest Stages of Cuomo's Ongoing Immigration Fraud Investigation

NEW YORK, NY (August 20, 2009) Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that his Office has shut down three New York companies providing unauthorized and fraudulent legal services to immigrant communities, in the latest stages of his ongoing investigation into immigration fraud. Under the terms of the agreements secured by Cuomo's Office, Immigration Solutions and Systems, Inc. of New York, Alisandra Multiservices, Inc. of Brentwood, Long Island, and All Immigration Services of Great Neck, Long Island are permanently barred from operating a business that provides immigration-related services and must collectively pay approximately \$118,000 in penalties.

Cuomo also announced separate lawsuits filed today in New York State Supreme Court against three additional companies providing legal services to immigrants which they were neither authorized nor accredited to provide. According to the lawsuits filed today in New York State Supreme Court, Immigration Community Service Corporation of Manhattan, and Professional Solutions Consultants (doing business as Reliable Clerical Services and Reliable Immigration Services), and Centro Santa Ana, both located in Queens, offered legal counsel to immigrants without being licensed attorneys or having the proper accreditation. In thousands of cases across New York City and Long Island, these companies unlawfully filed immigration petitions with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on behalf of immigrants and their families, jeopardizing efforts to obtain legal status.

"The consequences of bad legal advice can be absolutely devastating," said Attorney General Cuomo. "Fraudulent legal services can haunt individuals and their families for a lifetime. Companies and individuals that represent someone in a legal proceeding without having the authority to do so must be stopped, and my office will hold them accountable."

Under the terms of the agreements secured by Attorney General Cuomo with Immigration Solutions and Systems, Inc., Alisandra Multiservices, Inc., and All Immigration Services, the companies and their owners are permanently restricted from operating any immigration-related services business in the future and are required to collectively pay approximately \$118,000 in penalties. The settlements also require the companies to notify all former and current clients in writing that they are no longer providing any immigration-related services and to submit quarterly reports to the Attorney General of any complaints from the public.

The lawsuits against Immigration Community Service Corporation, Professional Solutions Consultants, and Centro Santa Ana allege that the companies and their owners not only gave unlicensed legal advice and fraudulently filed petitions with USCIS, but also failed to provide consumers with written contracts in both the consumer's native language and English, as required by law. The lawsuits seek to permanently bar the companies and their owners from providing immigration-related services in the future and seek penalties for these actions.

Senator Jose M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) said: "Attorney General Cuomo has led the fight against abusive and illegal companies like these that take advantage of NY's immigrant communities. His continued efforts are giving a voice to thousands of New Yorkers whose rights have been ignored for too long."

Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat (D-Manhattan) said: "New York was built on the backs of immigrant communities. We owe our very history to those brave individuals and families who left their homes to pursue the promise and opportunity this State has to offer. I applaud Attorney General Cuomo's ongoing fight to protect the diversity that defines us, and remain committed to working with his Office as these efforts continue."

Assemblyman Jose Peralta (D-Jackson Heights) said: "The fight to rid our community of individuals trying to scam, cheat or rob those legally trying to secure citizenship is a constant one. I am proud and honored to partner with Attorney General Cuomo as we continue to advocate for immigrant communities across New York State. Today's announcement will further our efforts to protect and defend the diversity of our great State."

Assemblyman Phil Ramos (D-Brentwood) said: "Attorney General Cuomo's ongoing investigation into immigration fraud has brought to light a variety of scams and schemes that target and take advantage of immigrant families. His ongoing efforts have delivered much needed protections to New York residents trying to make this state their home. I look forward to continuing to work with the Attorney General's office to combat immigration fraud and protect communities across New York."

Assemblyman Peter Rivera (D-Bronx) said: "Attorney General Cuomo's investigation into immigration fraud has addressed a growing problem in immigrant communities. I commend him for his efforts to stamp out

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 09082465. (Posted 08/24/09)

those businesses that prey on immigrants who are legally trying to secure citizenship."

Assemblyman Marcus Crespo (D-Bronx) said: "Attorney General Cuomo has made great strides in addressing immigration fraud. We have seen too many unethical businesses seek to take advantage of immigrant families who are legally trying to secure citizenship-promising them citizenship, stealing their money, and delivering nothing. I am proud to collaborate with the Attorney General in his efforts on behalf of immigrant communities."

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Brooklyn) said: "New York's diversity has always been the cornerstone of its success. As public servants of this great state, we are defined by the vibrant communities we represent. It is essential that we serve the needs of every single resident and continue to use every avenue to strengthen and support our communities. I commend the Attorney General for his continued efforts to protect the rights of each and every New Yorker."

In order to provide legal-related immigration services, state and federal law dictate that an individual must either be admitted to practice law or have obtained accreditation from the Board of Immigration Appeals. Businesses and individuals are able to provide other immigration services without a license, but those services must be limited to clerical duties.

This is the latest development in Attorney General Cuomo's investigation, which began with a lawsuit against Miriam Hernandez of Queens for defrauding dozens of immigrants of more than \$250,000. In addition, in May 2009 Cuomo issued more than 50 subpoenas to companies and individuals who are allegedly engaged in immigration services fraud.

Angela Fernandez, Executive Director of the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, said: "The law in New York is very clear on who can and cannot provide legal advice to immigrant consumers. Incorrect or misleading legal advice can lead to the deportation of individuals who could have qualified for a number of immigration benefits. These organizations and individuals are violating the law and, in the process, run the risk of destroying the lives of hardworking immigrants and their families. We applaud the efforts of the New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo in enforcing the law and in his continuing efforts to protect all consumers."

Deborah Notkin, Co-Chair of the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law for the American Immigration Lawyers Association in New York, said: "We commend New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo on filing these lawsuits to ensure that immigrant communities receive effective assistance when making important decisions regarding their immigration status. Changing your status is a critical legal decision and all persons undergoing the process should have competent and authorized representatives, as the law requires. Attorney General Cuomo's investigations reinforce these important principles for immigrant communities throughout the State."

The cases are being handled by Assistant Attorney General Vilda Vera Mayuga and Assistant Deputy Counselor Elizabeth De León with the assistance of Investigator David Negron, under the supervision of Bureau Chief for Civil Rights Alphonso B. David and Counsel for Civil Rights Spencer Freedman.

Individuals who have been a victim of immigration assistance fraud are urged to contact the Attorney General's Immigration Services Fraud Unit Hotline at (212) 416-6149.