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DA Stephan Recognizes National Consumer Protection Week, Urges Residents to Report Fraud

DA Has Secured \$13.6 million in Consumer Protection Judgments

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) today recognized National Consumer Protection Week (March 1 – March 7), and said her office is doubling down on its commitment to protecting consumers and is reminding residents that speaking up about scams, fraud, and unfair business practices helps protect the entire community.

“Consumer protection is about standing up for everyday people who were misled, overcharged, or taken advantage of,” said Summer Stephan. “When a company breaks the law, the harm is not abstract — it affects families who trusted what they were told and worked hard for their money. Our Consumer Protection Unit fights to hold companies who sideline the rules to unfairly enrich themselves accountable and to recover money for the people who were harmed. Our team of specialized prosecutors and investigators fights against big companies with armies of lawyers and win the battles for our everyday neighbors.”

“But these cases often begin with one person speaking up. A retiree who feels something isn’t right, a small business owner who notices a deceptive practice, or a neighbor who refuses to stay silent after being misled. During National Consumer Protection Week, I want everyone in San Diego County to know that your voice matters. When you report wrongdoing, you help us uncover patterns of misconduct, stop bad actors, and protect thousands of other consumers from being harmed.”

The District Attorney’s Consumer Protection Unit investigates unlawful business practices, and environmental abuses and pursues both civil and criminal cases against companies and individuals who defraud consumers. These actions can lead to restitution for victims, financial penalties for violators, and criminal charges when appropriate.

Recently, the DA's Office secured a major consumer protection victory in a multi-county enforcement action involving Vivint Solar. The company agreed to a \$4.3 million settlement, including a \$3 million restitution fund for eligible consumers who lost money under certain solar power purchase agreements. This case demonstrates how enforcement actions can provide real financial relief for consumers harmed by deceptive practices.

The DA's Consumer Protection Unit works to safeguard consumers and honest businesses by investigating and prosecuting unlawful business practices. The unit handles cases involving:

- Scams targeting seniors, investigated through a first of its kind in the nation specialized Elder Justice Task Force
- False or misleading advertising
- Cyber scams, handled by the office's specialized CATCH cybercrime team
- Unfair pricing or billing practices, including those that occur after natural disasters
- Deceptive contract terms or sales tactics including automatic renewal charges and scary debt collection tactics
- Environmental violations, such as illegal disposal of toxic waste

Over the past year, the District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit has taken significant action against businesses that violated consumer protection laws, including:

- More than \$13.6 million in consumer protection judgments against multiple companies
- Criminal fraud charges filed against a business owner who cheated customers
- A \$1 million settlement for overcharging consumers at the point of sale
- A \$3 million consumer restitution fund secured in the Vivint Solar case

These outcomes reflect meaningful consequences for businesses that break the law and real relief for consumers who have suffered financial harm.

Most consumer protection investigations begin with a complaint from a member of the public. When residents report suspicious business practices, it helps investigators identify patterns of misconduct that might otherwise go unnoticed. While the District Attorney's Office cannot act as a private attorney for individual disputes, consumer complaints frequently form the basis for broader enforcement actions that protect thousands of people.

Residents who believe they have been misled or harmed by a company are encouraged to report it. To file a consumer complaint:

Submit a complaint online:

<https://www.sdcda.org/preventing/consumer-protection/>

Call: (619) 531-3507

Email: consumer@sdcca.org

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office serves nearly 3.3 million residents in San Diego County and is the region's largest law enforcement agency responsible for prosecuting felony crimes. The office also protects the public through specialized units that address consumer protection, environmental crimes, human trafficking, elder abuse, and cybercrime. The District Attorney's Office works every day to pursue justice, protect victims, and ensure that San Diego County remains a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.