



Josh Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General

P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2024

AG Kaul Announces Judgment in Connection with Business Certificate Scam; Court Order Includes \$2.8 Million Penalty and Refunds for Over 7,000 Wisconsin Businesses

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today announced the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has secured a judgment against two Florida-based companies and their owners in connection with a business certificate scam that targeted thousands of Wisconsin businesses. The judgment requires the Defendants to pay over \$3.5 million in total, including more than \$600,000 to refund businesses affected by the Defendants’ illegal conduct.

“This significant judgment sends an unmistakable message that scams are not tolerated in Wisconsin,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “Wisconsin DOJ will continue cracking down on deceptive business practices that target other businesses or consumers.”

“This judgment serves as a reminder that scams and fraud are not welcome in Wisconsin,” said Secretary Randy Romanski of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). “It took hard work by staff at DATCP and the DOJ to reach this point, but their perseverance has paid off and Centurion is being held accountable.”

The DOJ, based on a referral from DATCP, sued Florida-based Centurion Filing Services, LLC, which operated as “WI Certificate Service,” in September 2022. The lawsuit alleged Centurion sent to Wisconsin businesses tens of thousands of mailers that appeared to be from a government office and asked recipients to purchase a Certificate of Status at a cost of \$72.50. In truth, businesses are not required to

purchase a Certificate of Status; businesses that wish to do so can easily order the form from the Department of Financial Institutions for \$10. More than 7,000 Wisconsin businesses placed orders with Defendants and are entitled to a refund under the Court's order.

The lawsuit also named Centurion's owners, Dean Marshlack, David Marshlack, and Brian Capobianco, as Defendants, alleging that they had knowledge and control of the company's illegal activities. The lawsuit was later amended to also include Corporate Certificates, LLC, a related business owned by the same individuals and engaged in the same illegal conduct. The Court's ruling found all five Defendants liable.

The Court's judgment requires the Defendants to send refund notices to every Wisconsin business that placed an order with them and refund each business \$72.50 per order. In total, the Defendants are required to pay over \$626,000 in refunds. The Court also ordered the Defendants to pay more than \$2.8 million in monetary penalties and costs. The judgment was entered by Dane County Circuit Court Judge Jacob Frost.

A copy of the Court's liability ruling, the Court's final judgment, and a list of businesses entitled to a refund are included below. Wisconsin businesses included on this list and who have questions about the refund process may contact DOJ's Public Protection Unit by phone (608-266-1852) or email (consumerprotection@doj.state.wi.us).

The State was represented in this case by Assistant Attorney General Colin Stroud, with support from Paralegals Wendy Phifer and Barbara Burr. The case was investigated and referred by DATCP staff Carmen Reeder, Nicole Raisbeck, and attorney Paul LaZotte.