

Attorney General Raoul Files Lawsuit To Defend Illinois Residents From Predatory Personal Lending Company

by Office of the Attorney General
April 3 2024 10:01 AM



CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced today that Illinois joined a [multistate lawsuit](#) against Mariner Finance for violations of multiple consumer protection laws. The suit alleges that Mariner Finance charged consumers for hidden add-on products that consumers either didn't know about or didn't agree to buy.

In 2019 alone, Mariner charged consumers \$121.7 million nationwide in premiums and fees for add-on products.

“Consumers thought they had entered into agreements to borrow and repay a specific amount of money, but Mariner quietly added hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of dollars to the total amount each customer owed,” Raoul said. “I am proud to partner with my fellow attorneys general to protect the public from deceptive practices and predatory lending schemes.”

On March 22, Illinois, along with the states of Indiana, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin filed a motion to intervene in a complaint against Mariner that was already pending in a federal district court in Pennsylvania. The court granted the motion, allowing the states to join the lawsuit by filing an amended complaint yesterday.

The lawsuit alleges that Mariner Finance employees either don’t mention the add-on products to consumers or blatantly misrepresent them. Mariner Finance employees also allegedly claim the products are required to obtain a loan when technically no such requirements exist. Some consumers were told by Mariner Finance that add-ons were free or much cheaper than they actually were, while other consumers who explicitly rejected the add-on products were charged for them anyway.

The lawsuit also alleges that Mariner Finance engages in illegal, aggressive sales tactics to extend credit to new borrowers. Mariner’s marketing heavily features the fact that consumers can visit a Mariner Financial branch and leave with a check on the same day. Mariner mails hundreds of thousands of unsolicited “live checks” to consumers. Once consumers cash these checks, Mariner aggressively pushes them to visit a branch to refinance and take out additional debt, which typically comes with hidden add-on products. These kinds of predatory sales practices can lead consumers into a cycle of debt that is hard to break.

The multistate lawsuit Raoul and the coalition filed asks the court to order:

- Full restitution to all borrowers affected by Mariner’s unlawful practices.
- Repayment by Mariner of any unlawfully gained profits.
- Civil penalties.
- Rescission or reformation of all contracts or loan agreements between Mariner and consumers affected by the company’s unlawful practices.
- Mariner to stop charging consumers for add-on products and cease other harmful practices.

Mariner Financial has 29 branches throughout Illinois. Borrowers who believe they have been deceived by Mariner’s harmful practices should file a complaint by visiting the [Attorney General’s website](#) or calling the Attorney General’s Consumer Fraud hotlines:

1-800-386-5438 (Chicago)
1-800-243-0618 (Springfield)
1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale)