

Global Healings Ordered to Pay Restitution to Florida Consumers

Company Claimed Its Bond Eliminated the Need for Insurance Attorney General Charlie Crist's office has won a lawsuit against a Washington State-based company that sold fraudulent bonds purporting to eliminate the need for standard insurance coverage, a false claim that cost 425 Florida victims \$300 per person, for a total loss of \$127,500. Leon County Circuit Judge Jonathan Sjostrom entered a final judgment against Global Healings Society and owner Joseph Michael Gardinier, requiring the defendants to pay restitution as well as fines of \$1,000 per victim, a total of more than \$550,000. "This judgment marks a victory for Florida consumers and sends a clear message that fraud of this type has no place in our state," said Crist. "Floridians depend on insurance offered by reputable agents to protect them from significant financial liability, and those offering phony alternatives face serious legal consequences." An investigation conducted by the Attorney General's Economic Crimes Division revealed that Global Healings Society was selling what it claimed were "financial bonds" over the Internet. Gardinier, owner and caretaker of the organization, directed its activities and was responsible for the various bond programs sponsored by Global Healings. The bonds purported to protect the bearers from financial responsibility in the event of any incident that would warrant an insurance claim. Not only were the bonds fraudulent, but there was no money available for the injured party in the event that a claim was filed against a bearer of the bonds. Types of bonds offered by Global Healings included an auto bond, a health bond, a home equity bond, a student bond, a "Benefit for Life" bond and a community financial bond. The organization was not licensed to do business in Florida, nor was it an authorized insurer in the state. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles determined that the organization's auto bond card was not valid to prove insurance coverage as required by law. In response, Gardinier conducted a series of conference calls to members of the organization soliciting donations to cover the cost of suing the State of Florida. Similar solicitations were made in Montana and Washington, where Global Healings has already been prohibited from conducting business. Referred from: (<http://www.consumeraffairs.com>)