

Biography

ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN



Often recognized for her leadership and integrity, Lisa Madigan has brought a high level of activism to the Office of Illinois Attorney General. From her first days in office, she has demonstrated principled leadership, putting policy before politics and focusing her work as the state's top legal advocate on protecting the people and communities of Illinois. Under Madigan's leadership, the Consumer Protection Division has established a national reputation for aggressively safeguarding consumers from financial fraud and unsafe products. Madigan has dedicated the energy and resources of her office to protecting children and women from the dangers of sexual predators and established herself as a leader in the public's fight for open and accessible government. Additionally, Madigan has been widely praised for implementing a series of proactive law enforcement strategies to protect seniors in nursing homes and to combat the spread of methamphetamine throughout the state. From a fiscal standpoint, the Attorney General's office has generated more than \$7 billion for the state since Madigan took office in 2003.

Madigan is the first Illinois Attorney General in over 25 years to personally argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court (*Illinois v. Caballes*) in which the Court upheld the ability of law enforcement to detect the presence of illegal drugs during traffic stops. Under her leadership, the Attorney General's office has argued five cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the national arena, Attorney General Madigan is a respected advocate, regularly testifying before Congress and federal commissions charged with strengthening consumer financial protections, in part due to her aggressive crackdown on the country's largest subprime lenders and her advocacy for reining in abuse and retraining state enforcement powers. Madigan also has testified before Congress on a range of subjects, from protections for consumers' privacy to recalled children's products, employment discrimination, natural gas prices and energy trading.

Initiatives

Madigan's proactive approach to her duties as attorney general has attracted national attention, as other states look to Illinois for innovative and bold ideas. Madigan's key initiatives include:

Consumer Protection: Madigan has made protecting consumers during tough economic times a priority. Her efforts to safeguard consumers include filing lawsuits to stop financial fraud and recover losses on behalf of harmed consumers, mediating consumer complaints, and educating consumers—especially seniors—on prevalent financial scams and product recalls.

With tens of thousands of Illinoisans facing foreclosure, Attorney General Madigan has combated the devastating results of predatory lending and mortgage fraud. Her office sued some of the nation's largest mortgage lenders, including Ameriquest, Countrywide and Wells Fargo, and obtained more than \$9 billion in damages and restitution for borrowers.

Madigan also has advanced legislation to protect Illinois homeowners, including the High Risk Home Loan Act, the Mortgage Rescue Fraud Act and the Homeownership Preservation Act, a law that tightens controls on mortgage lenders and prohibits the abusive lending practices that resulted in the foreclosure crisis. At the federal level, Madigan has championed establishing an independent federal consumer protection agency tasked with promoting consumer interests and sound credit practices.

Madigan works to protect Illinois utility consumers from unfair and unnecessary rate increases. In 2007, the Attorney General helped broker a ground-breaking electric rate relief and reform package with ComEd and Ameren to provide consumer refunds and credits totaling \$1 billion. The resulting law also ensured efficient and environmentally sustainable electric service for Illinois consumers. Madigan continues to hold public utilities accountable to consumer interests by regularly appearing before the Illinois Commerce Commission to oppose unfair rate increase requests.

Protecting Communities from Sex Offenders and Online Predators: Madigan's tireless efforts to safeguard children and women from sexual predators have established Illinois as a nationally recognized model. In 2003, she created a statewide law enforcement team to improve the state's obsolete sex offender registry. Since that time, she has proposed successful legislation to strengthen sex offender laws that require lifetime supervision and has coordinated efforts to locate offenders who fail to register. Madigan also helped make Illinois the first state in the nation with a law mandating the submission and testing of sexual assault evidence. The Illinois Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Act creates a statewide protocol to test all DNA rape kits. Crime victim advocates are pushing for national reforms similar to those already enacted in Illinois.

Attorney General Madigan also dedicates significant resources to high-tech crime investigations targeting Internet predators and child pornographers. Madigan oversees the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force, a collaboration of law enforcement agencies across Illinois which tracks and arrests offenders who exploit innocent children. The Attorney General also hosted the first-ever Cyber Safety Summit, bringing together state and local law enforcement officials, school officials, and technology experts to discuss youth cyber safety, including bullying and sexting, and ways to combat the dangers associated with children's widespread access to technology. Madigan provides Internet safety education to tens of thousands of children, parents, and teachers to help them avoid online dangers.

Keeping Seniors Safe: Protecting older citizens continues to be a high priority for Attorney General Madigan. As part of her efforts to keep nursing homes safe for our most vulnerable populations, Madigan has successfully worked to require background checks and criminal history analyses of nursing home residents to identify those who might pose a threat to others. In addition, Madigan authored the Resident's Right to Know Act to provide better information to residents and their families. The law requires nursing homes to complete an annual Consumer Choice Information Report detailing the facility's standard of care, service and security issues.

Madigan's most recent efforts includes "Operation Guardian," a multi-agency program that makes unannounced visits and compliance checks at nursing homes around Illinois to ensure residents' safety. The initiative expands on her earlier work to shut down south suburban Emerald Park Nursing Home that was found to have housed numerous sex offenders and other felons.

Safeguarding Our Environment: Attorney General Madigan has taken the lead in protecting Illinois' air, water and land from pollution. On the federal level, Madigan has advocated stronger air emission standards for electric power plants and motor vehicles. At the state level, Madigan continues to fight for a cleaner environment and to hold polluters responsible for their actions. Madigan led negotiations to develop new laws that promote investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy resources and carbon reduction technology in Illinois. These laws are helping consumers cut energy costs, creating thousands of green jobs, and reducing environmental impacts associated with the utility sector. Under her leadership, the Attorney General's office successfully litigated the largest Clean Air Act enforcement case in state history, requiring the defendant to spend more than \$88 million on pollution reduction projects at its Illinois facilities. The Attorney General also led efforts to clean up nuclear waste at Illinois electric plants, and she brought a Clean Water Act enforcement action against the Village of Crestwood, a municipality that knowingly used a contaminated well to provide drinking water to local residents.

Fighting for Open and Accessible Government: Attorney General Madigan's commitment to making government more open and accessible led her to create one of

the first Public Access Counselor (PAC) positions in the country as a resource for citizens who are denied access to public records. Further, Madigan successfully pushed for the first major overhaul of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in decades. Working with open government advocates, the legislation strengthened state transparency laws to hold government more accountable. The new law codifies the Public Access Counselor's ability to review and determine whether documents must be disclosed under FOIA or whether a government body has violated the Open Meetings Act. Madigan has received the "Sunshine Award" from the Society of Professional Journalists for her important contributions in the continuing fight for open government.

Awards and Honors

Madigan's firm belief that one person can make a difference is what led her into a career in public service and drives her work as the state's chief legal officer. Over the course of her career, many organizations have recognized and honored Madigan's accomplishments.

In 2005, Attorney General Madigan received the John F. Kennedy New Frontier Award, an honor presented annually to an American elected official whose contributions in office demonstrate the impact and value of public service in the spirit of President Kennedy. Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg, in presenting the award, recognized Attorney General Madigan as "an inspiration to all young Americans who share my father's belief that one person can make a difference and everyone should try."

In 2006, Madigan was one of 24 elected officials chosen to receive an Aspen Institute Rodel Fellowship, which recognizes the nation's most outstanding young political leaders and is focused on the ethics and responsibilities of public leadership.

Madigan is proud of the recognition she has received for her public service work from such organizations as the American Association of Retired Persons, American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, Better Business Bureau, Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, Equality Illinois, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Center for Violence Prevention, Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association, Illinois Environmental Council, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, Illinois Press Association, Illinois PTA, League of Women Voters, National Foundation for Credit Counseling, National MS Society of Greater Illinois, Rape Victim Advocates and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Background

In November 2002, Attorney General Madigan became the first woman elected to serve as the Illinois Attorney General, and one of only a handful of female Attorneys General in the country. In 2010, she was elected to her third term as Attorney General and now is the senior-most female Attorney General in the country.

Before her election as Attorney General, Madigan served in the Illinois Senate and worked as a litigator for a Chicago law firm. Prior to becoming an attorney, she was a teacher and community advocate, developing after-school programs to help keep kids away from drugs and gangs. Madigan also volunteered as a high school teacher in South Africa during apartheid.

Madigan earned her bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and her J.D. from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. She and her husband, Pat Byrnes, have two daughters.