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## **Attorney General Steve Marshall Gets Restraining Order Against North Alabama Massage Businesses in State's First Civil Human-Trafficking Case**

(MONTGOMERY) – The Madison County Circuit Court has granted a request by Attorney General Steve Marshall for a temporary restraining order against a chain of North Alabama massage businesses that he said was actually operating a human-trafficking enterprise. This is the first civil action taken under the new civil enforcement provision to Alabama's human-trafficking law. The complaint also alleges violations of Alabama's Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

TY Green's Massage Therapy, Inc., its owner Yuping Tang, and manager Jiao Liu, who is her daughter, and their four businesses are restrained from conducting business in Alabama. The businesses operate in Huntsville under the names Health Massage and Massage Foot Care, and in Madison and Decatur under the name Massage Foot Care. All assets have been frozen, and a receiver was appointed by the Court to take control of the businesses until a preliminary injunction hearing can be held.

"Alabama's new law provides a valuable tool to more effectively fight human traffickers and restore dignity and freedom to their victims," said Attorney General Marshall. "With this civil action, we were able to respond to the dire urgency of the situation, shut down the trafficking operation, rescue the victims, and preserve assets that can be used to help those who have been harmed."

In his legal complaint, Attorney General Marshall told the Court that "evidence collected during this investigation has revealed that the Defendants are running illicit massage businesses that serve as fronts for a human-trafficking operation. In the Defendants' organization, the 'employees' work incredibly long hours during which at least some of them are expected to engage in sex acts with the businesses' customers. When the victims are not 'working,' they seem to have little freedom of movement, they are transported in groups to and from the Defendants' businesses and are kept in houses owned by the Defendants where they are left to eat and sleep in terrible conditions. The Defendants, on the other hand, have reaped millions of dollars in revenue from their businesses, and the Attorney General now brings this action in order to put an end to their conduct and protect their victims from further harm."

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This immediate civil court action was vital, the Attorney General explained, to keep defendants from moving and hiding their victims as well as to stop disposal or transfer of assets. In addition to financial accounts, the defendants' business premises and residences have been seized. Attorney General Marshall has asked the Court to permanently shut down the defendants' human-trafficking network and grant monetary damages as restitution for its victims.

The victims are of Chinese nationality. Information is not available at this time about how many victims there are. For safety reasons, their whereabouts may not be disclosed. This matter is a civil proceeding. There is no further comment.

Attorney General Marshall thanked the agencies involved in the investigation of this case, including the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy; the Alabama departments of Labor and Revenue; the Morgan and Madison county district attorneys' offices; the Madison, Huntsville and Decatur police departments, the Madison City Attorney's Office, the Madison County Sheriff's Office, the National Children's Advocacy Center and the Alabama Fusion Center. He commended those handling the case in the Attorney General's Office, noting in particular Assistant Attorneys General Audrey Jordan and Michael G. Dean, the Consumer Interest Division and Special Agents in the Investigations Division.