

## Maker of Michael Vick Dog Chew Toy Sued

**Internet-run business allegedly misrepresented proceeds would benefit animal charities.**

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An Internet-based business based in Jacksonville, Fla., has landed in legal trouble for allegedly misleading customers that the proceeds from sales of a Michael Vick-themed dog chew toy would go to local animal charities.

The state's attorney general filed a lawsuit Thursday, April 9, claiming that Showbiz Promotions and its owner, Jaime Salcedo, never made any donations to animal welfare groups. A phone number was not available for Salcedo or the business.

The website began selling the NFL star dog chew toys in October 2007, according to the lawsuit, and the attorney general's office has reviewed more than 200 consumer complaints since 2008. "The numerous consumer complaints received by the Attorney General are indicative of a pattern and practice of unfair, fraudulent and deceptive business practices" by Salcedo, the lawsuit states.

For example, the site claims that the toys are "made right here in the USA," however, the product was found to be manufactured outside of the United States. The original version of the company's website also stated that "a portion of the proceeds go to local animal shelters and organizations."

Because no such contributions have been made so far, the lawsuit states Salcedo violated state law for unfair and deceptive trade practices. Salcedo began cooperating with the attorney general, yet numerous consumer complaints remain unresolved.

"Any company that intentionally misleads innocent consumers to believe they are contributing to worthy charitable causes is absolutely reprehensible," Attorney General Bill McCollum said in a statement.

The lawsuit also includes a claim about the company's sale of a doll named for murdered toddler Caylee Anthony and a promise to donate \$5,000 to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Only a \$10.00 gift was confirmed.

The attorney general is seeking civil penalties in the amount of \$10,000 per willful violation of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.