

April 18, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES FIVE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN LIQUOR STORE SALES TAX FRAUD SWEEP

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced charges against five Chicago liquor store operators as part of a sweep to crack down on sales tax evasion and interstate liquor bootlegging. The charges are part of a joint effort with the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) to investigate and prosecute untaxed or bootlegged liquor brought in from outside Illinois. The Secret Service assisted IDOR with the investigation

Four defendants were charged in Cook County Circuit Court with sales tax evasion of more than \$100,000, a Class 1 felony punishable by up to four to 15 years in prison. Additionally, two defendants were charged with sales tax evasion of more than \$10,000, a Class 2 felony punishable by up to three to seven years in prison. One defendant was charged with sales tax evasion of more than \$500.

"Today's indictments are part of a concentrated effort between my office and the Department of Revenue to crack down on tax evasion and illegal interstate liquor sales," Raoul said. "This should send a message that doing business in Illinois means following the state's laws without exception."

Raoul filed charges against the following five individuals:

- Diptiben Patel, 38, of Munster, Ind.: Patson Liquor, Inc. (doing business as Buddy's Liquors/Cardinal Liquor);
- Ashwinkumar Patel, 45, of Tinley Park, Ill.: AM Wine and Spirits (doing business as Marshfield Wine and Spirits);
- Sanjaykumar K. Soni, 50, of Tinley Park, Ill.: KVS Calumet City Liquor Business, Inc. (doing business as Miska's Food and Liquor);
- Rajendrakumar P. Patel, 51, of Worth, Ill.: KVS Calumet City Liquor Business, Inc. (doing business as Miska's Food and Liquor);
- Ajaykumar C. Patel, 51, of Morton Grove, Ill.: Dabaang, Inc (doing business as Harper Food and Liquor).

"Today's indictment should serve as a strong deterrent to businesses that are considering taking part in similar illegal activities," James Gorman, Deputy Special Agent in Charge of the Secret Service Chicago Field Office said. "This case demonstrates the investigative capabilities of the United States Secret Service and is a testament to the Secret Service's commitment to building successful partnerships between local, state and federal law enforcement agencies."

"Allegations of illegal importation of alcohol to defraud our tax system is a problem we take seriously," David Harris, Illinois Department of Revenue Director designate said. "I thank the Attorney General's Office for pursuing this matter and applaud the hard work and effort put forth by Illinois Revenue's Criminal Investigation's Division."

This is the latest effort by the Attorney General's office to pursue businesses and retailers who avoid paying sales taxes. In 2015, a similar sweep led to charges against nine liquor store owners- the first of its kind since the 2013 law that created the crime of sales tax evasion and imposed stronger, graduated penalties based on the amount of sales taxes evaded.

The public is reminded that the defendants are innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.

Assistant Attorneys General Victor Turla and Megan McGuire-Bachman are handling the cases for Raoul's Special Prosecutions Bureau.