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## **ASSEMBLYMEMBER RON KIM AND LEGAL AID SOCIETY TARGETS PREDATORY TOWING**

### ***Joint Effort Geared Toward Consumer Protection against Illegal Towing Practice***

Flushing, N.Y. – In response to a number of allegations against All About Automotive II, Inc. (AAA), Assemblymember Ron Kim (D – Flushing) and the Legal Aid Society worked together to help consumers file their collective complaints. The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) is currently pursuing 16 charges of illegal practices by AAA.

“Through this collaboration with the Legal Aid Society, we are able to protect the rights of consumers against the infamous towing company that has knowingly violated laws for years,” **Assemblymember Ron Kim** said. “Additionally, I am committed to introducing new legislation that will provide further protection against illegal predatory towing in New York.”

“We have witnessed an epidemic of New Yorkers having their cars held hostage by towing companies like All About Automotive II,” said **Tashi Lhewa, Esq.**, a leading lawyer of this case. “Their predatory and illegal towing practices require immediate and increased enforcement of existing laws to protect unsuspecting motorists.”

“The Department of Consumer Affairs will not tolerate predatory and illegal towing,” said **Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin**. “When we hear from consumers who have been victimized, we take strong enforcement action as we have done here and seek license revocation, fines and restitution for consumers. We thank Legal Aid and Assembly Member Kim for encouraging victims to file complaints so that they can obtain relief to which they are entitled.”

All About Automotive II, Inc. (“AAA”), a sole proprietorship company which makes profits mainly through providing a towing service, has been charged with numerous complaints about towing cases that occurred in the private shopping mall parking lot which is located on 156th Street and Northern Boulevard in Queens. The complaints have shown a pattern of abusive and illegal activities which can collectively be labeled as “predatory towing.” For instance, the company committed violations and consumer

frauds by arbitrarily selecting and towing vehicles of shoppers without a direct dispatch from the property owner. The company has also been overcharging the victims and refusing to release the vehicles back to the owners unless paid with cash only.

AAA is currently licensed by the DCA as a tow truck company and in January 2014, in response to violations issued by the DCA, AAA entered into a settlement agreement with the DCA and agreed to comply with all the law, submit monthly compliance reports and pay \$55,000 in consumer restitution and fines. Despite this agreement, AAA continues to violate the law and DCA has received more than 65 consumer complaints since January. Many complaints are about tows from private parking lots without authorization from the owners of the lots, failing to take towed vehicles back to the storage yard, and damage to towed vehicles. DCA is currently seeking to revoke All About Automotive II Inc.'s license and secure consumer restitution and fines. The hearing continues on December 1. Consumers can get tips about tow truck companies and file a complaint at [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers) or by calling 311.

Since 2013, Assemblymember Kim and the Legal Aid Society have worked together to provide free legal assistance and one-on-one counseling for constituents. Through this partnership, the Legal Aid Society provided pro-bono legal services to underserved working families on many issues such as housing, family support, and consumer protection.

Assemblymember Kim and the Legal Aid Society are providing a consumer hotline number (until December 20, 2014) at (718) 552-7714 with language accessibility in Chinese and Korean. Local residents who believe that they were victimized by predatory towing can use this number to file their complaints or ask further questions. Those who wish to file a consumer complaint to the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs can always call 311 for immediate assistance in different languages.