

Horne Issues National Mortgage Settlement Consumer Alert to Arizonans

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PHOENIX (Tuesday, April 24, 2012) -- As the National Mortgage Settlement between Arizona and 48 other states, the federal government, and the country's five largest residential mortgage loan servicers goes into effect, Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne is alerting Arizona consumers looking for mortgage relief to beware of scam artists.

“Consumers should be aware that scammers are already using the media coverage of the settlement to exploit homeowners by promising quicker assistance in obtaining the refinancing, principal reduction, or cash payments available to eligible consumers under the settlement,” Horne said. “If you receive an unsolicited contact regarding the mortgage settlement, you need to protect yourself.”

Attorney General Horne's alert includes these tips:

- Beware of anyone who claims they can speed up the assistance you might be eligible for under the settlement for a fee. You will not be charged a fee to obtain relief under the settlement.
- Beware of anyone who calls claiming to be from your mortgage servicer or the government and asks to confirm personal or financial information to speed up your relief under the settlement. Neither your bank nor the government will ever ask for your routing number, checking account number, or other financial information over the phone.
- You may receive legitimate mail from your servicer regarding the settlement if your mortgage loan is serviced by Bank of

America, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi, or GMAC/Ally. If you do receive a call or mail regarding the settlement, examine it closely to determine whether it is from the same entity you make your mortgage payments to. Scammers often use company names very close to another company to confuse and deceive consumers. (For example, instead of a letter from GMAC, you may receive a letter from GAMC).

- If you are unsure whether a caller is legitimate, ask for the person's name and title and tell them you are going to call your bank and confirm. Make sure to use the official contact information listed below, not a number the caller provides.

- o Bank of America: 877-488-7814

- o JP Morgan Chase: 866-372-6901

- o Wells Fargo: 800-288-3212

- o CitiBank: 866-272-4749

- o GMAC/Ally: 800-766-4622

- If you are looking to refinance or get a loan modification, remember that it is against state and federal law to charge upfront fees for mortgage-related assistance in most cases.

Consumers who feel they have been a victim of mortgage fraud, or who would like to report consumer fraud, may file a consumer complaint with our Office. To file a complaint online, consumers can visit: www.azag.gov/consumer/complaintform.html. For more information about the national mortgage settlement, visit

www.azag.gov/consumer/foreclosure/settlement.html or contact the Attorney General's Mortgage Settlement Team at 602-542-1797 or 1 (855) 256-2834 toll free or mortgagefraud@azag.gov. To find out if you are eligible for relief under the national mortgage settlement, contact your mortgage servicer at the number listed above, or a HUD-certified housing counselor.

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