

PRESS RELEASE

Lead defendant in nationwide foreclosure rescue scam sentenced to 10 years in prison

Thursday, October 5, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Ohio

CINCINNATI – A Hamilton, Ohio, man was sentenced in U.S. District Court today to 120 months in prison for his role in a foreclosure rescue scheme that defrauded at least 780 financially distressed homeowners throughout the United States, including more than 100 individuals in the Southern District of Ohio.

Lorin Kal Buckner, 67, preyed on homeowners who had defaulted on their mortgages and convinced the victims to pay to take part in fraudulent programs on the promise it would save their homes.

Buckner was convicted of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and wire fraud and conspiracy to commit bankruptcy fraud following a jury trial in November 2022. He is one of 11 individuals charged in the scheme.

According to court documents and trial testimony, from 2013 through 2018, the defendants took advantage of homeowners' desperation to save their homes and used money from homeowner victims to personally enrich themselves.

Co-conspirators promised affiliates commissions by recruiting distressed homeowners to companies including:

- MVP Home Solutions, LLC, also known as
 - Stay In or Walk Away;
- Bolden Pinnacle Group Corp., also known as
 - Home Advisory Services Network
 - Home Advisory Services Group Inc.; and

- Silverstein & Wolf Corp.

Affiliates were encouraged to be aggressive in recruiting homeowners. Affiliates used online databases and court records to identify vulnerable, financially distressed homeowners who had recently received notice of foreclosure on their home.

Buckner and his co-conspirators mailed more than 56,000 postcards in the Southern District of Ohio and elsewhere promising that they could “stop foreclosure” or “stop the sheriff sale” for a fixed fee. Buckner and his co-conspirators also reached out to homeowners using Craigslist ads, websites, email and social media platforms.

On the promise of reducing or eliminating mortgage obligations in exchange for a fee, recruiters like Buckner would collect payments from homeowners and refer the victims to the co-conspirator companies.

Among other things, the defendants promised:

- to negotiate with mortgage lenders on the homeowners’ behalf for the purchase of the mortgage notes at a discount;
- to negotiate the sale of their home and release of their mortgage loans through a short sale and/or deed in lieu of foreclosure sale;
- to stop an imminent foreclosure sale;
- to remove the mortgage lien via a tender offer; and
- achieve short sale prices at a fraction of the value of the outstanding lien/note.

Further, defendants represented that they had “proprietary” methods or “legal tactics” to help homeowners stall or completely avoid foreclosure. In actuality, the defendants persuaded homeowners to file chapter 13 bankruptcies to delay foreclosure actions.

Defendants filed skeletal bankruptcy petitions that they called “pump fakes” or “missiles,” These petitions intentionally failed to disclose the defendants as preparers giving the appearance that the homeowners had filed the petitions pro se. Any relief from foreclosure delay was temporary until the bankruptcy court dismissed the proceeding. As a result of the defendants’ scheme, victims lost thousands of dollars and in many cases lost their homes.

Kenneth L. Parker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Robert Manchak, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Housing Finance Agency - Office of Inspector General (FHFA-OIG), Northeast Region; J. William Rivers, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Division; Lesley C. Allison, Inspector in Charge, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), Pittsburgh Division; and

Philip R. Bartlett, Inspector in Charge, USPIIS, New York Division, announced the sentence imposed today by Senior U.S. District Judge Michael R. Barrett. Assistant United States Attorneys Ebunoluwa A. Taiwo and Timothy S. Mangan are representing the United States in this case.

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