

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Attorney General Balderas Seeks Restraining Order to Protect Homeowners & Stop Sham Lawsuits**

*Albuquerque, NM* – Today, the Office of the Attorney General filed a lawsuit and sought a temporary restraining order against a New Mexico attorney, Johsua R. Simms, and a group of non-attorneys, who the Attorney General alleges take advantage of consumers in financial distress and who are trying to avoid a foreclosure on their homes. The non-attorneys often did business under the name "Praedium Preservation" and that business was headed by Mukthiar S. Khalsa.

“This office aggressively enforces consumer protection laws, particularly on behalf of our families and consumers who are vulnerable, such as those seeking help in foreclosure,” Attorney General Balderas said. “Consumers facing foreclosure should not be preyed upon---they deserve their day in court and deserve representation by a licensed attorney who will represent the consumer's interests.”

In its 56 page complaint, the Office of the Attorney General ("OAG") alleges that Simms and the non-attorneys violated both federal and state laws and abused court processes for their own gain. The OAG alleges that Defendants did so by engaging in a scheme to take money, deeds, and powers of attorney from consumers facing foreclosure after Defendants told consumers that Defendants could "fight the foreclosure" for the consumer. Instead, Defendants in some cases placed their friends or family in homes which are being foreclosed upon to live rent-free and failed to assist the consumer in the foreclosure. Also, the OAG alleges that these Defendants filed sham lawsuits and other false or deceptive pleadings in the courts and county clerks' offices for the purpose of delaying foreclosures or to trick judges into signing orders giving the defendants titles to homes.

In addition, the OAG alleges that the non-attorneys engaged in the unauthorized practice of law by giving homeowners legal advice and pleadings to file in the homeowner's foreclosure case, and that Simms entered his appearance in some cases without the knowledge or consent of the homeowner.

**Consumers who have had contact with Praedium Preservation, Khalsa or Simms should call the OAG's Consumer & Environmental Protection Division at [505-222-9100](tel:5052229100).**

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