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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

California Man Arrested for Promising Florida Seniors Mortgage Payment Elimination

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution and Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis's Department of Financial Services today announced the arrest of a California man bilking Florida seniors. California authorities Thursday arrested Carlo Hamrahi in Los Angeles on a warrant issued out of Lee County, Florida. The arrest follows an investigation by DFS and OSP uncovering massive mortgage fraud targeting dozens of seniors.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "For many seniors, their homes are their most valuable asset and a cornerstone of their retirement plan. The defendant in this case used the allure of reducing or eliminating mortgage payments to defraud Florida seniors. He promised them financial freedom and in doing so risked losing his own freedom for decades to come. I want to commend my Statewide Prosecutors and DFS investigators for their diligent efforts in this case. I also want to thank California authorities for apprehending the suspect."

Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis said, "Orchestrating a fraud scheme to take advantage of Floridians is despicable and it's especially heinous when it's our seniors who fall victim. These individuals worked their entire lives to build a nest egg and unfortunately scam artists like this will do anything to steal their money. I thank Attorney General Moody's Office and my fraud investigators for their hard work together in uncovering this scheme and bringing this fraudster to justice."

According to an investigation, Hamrahi, using the alias Roberto Colleoni, defrauded home and business owners in Florida by claiming to be a mortgage fraud investigator. Hamrahi promised targets he could get mortgage payments reduced or eliminated by discovering fraud in loan documents. Hamrahi invited victims to seminars and solicited thousands of dollars in upfront fees for these fraudulent services. Hamrahi defrauded at least 24 victims, many 60 or older.

Authorities in California convicted Hamrahi twice previously of siminar crimes on the West Coast. Indiana authorities also convicted Hamrahi on similar charges.

Hamrahi is charged with one count of being involved in an organized scheme to defraud, in violation of F.S. 817.034(4)(1). If convicted, Hamrahi faces up to 30 years in prison. Attorney General Moody's Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Russell C. Stoddard will prosecute the case.