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**FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**  
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

# Mortgage Relief Defendant Banned from Debt Relief Business in Settlement with FTC

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FOR RELEASE

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Benjamin R. Horton is banned from the debt relief business under a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission for his role in a mortgage relief scheme that falsely promised financially distressed homeowners foreclosure prevention and more affordable mortgage payments.

According to the FTC, the operation typically charged consumers \$3,900 in unlawful advance fees and touted a 98-100 percent success rate. The defendants, typically operating as Preferred Law PLLC, Consumer Defense LLC, or American Home Loans, allegedly used doctored government logos, falsely suggesting they were affiliated with or endorsed by the federal government's Making Home Affordable loan modification program.

The defendants claimed to have special relationships with particular lenders and unlawfully told consumers not to make mortgage payments to, or communicate with, their lenders. Many people incurred substantial interest charges and other penalties for paying the defendants instead of their lenders, and some lost their homes to foreclosure.

In addition to banning Horton from the debt relief business, the settlement order prohibits him from misrepresenting financial or any other products and services, and from making unsubstantiated claims about

any financial product or service. It also bars him from profiting from consumers' personal information collected as part of the challenged practices.

The order imposes a judgment of more than \$15.5 million that will be suspended due to Horton's inability to pay. The full judgment will become due immediately if he is found to have misrepresented his financial condition.

Litigation continues against the remaining defendants.

The Commission vote approving the proposed stipulated final order was 5-0. The U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada entered the order on June 5, 2018.

For consumer information about avoiding mortgage and foreclosure rescue scams, see [Mortgage Relief Scams](#).

NOTE: Stipulated final orders or injunctions have the force of law when approved and signed by the District Court judge.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and [protect and educate consumers](#). You can [learn more about consumer topics](#) and file a [consumer complaint online](#) or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), read our [blogs](#) and [subscribe to press releases](#) for the latest FTC news and resources.

**PRESS RELEASE REFERENCE:**

[FTC Halts Deceptive Mortgage Loan Modification Scheme](#)

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