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Press Release
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Attorney General Horne Settles Fair Housing Lawsuit; Largest in Civil Rights Division History

PHOENIX (Tuesday, July 26, 2011) -- Attorney General Tom Horne today announced the largest settlement of a fair housing lawsuit in the Civil Rights Division's history.

The settlement arises from a housing discrimination lawsuit filed in Maricopa County Superior Court in May 2007 against Texas-based Defendant Hall Financial Group, LTD, and related entities Hall Apartment Management, LTD, NHP Villa L.P. and N.H.P. Villa G.P., Inc., concerning their operation of the Villatree Apartments in Tempe in 2006. It resolves the Attorney General's lawsuit against the Hall entities that was brought under the Arizona Fair Housing Act for alleged race, national origin and religious discrimination against Soha Abdelrahman and her husband, Hany Ibrahim. The settlement does not constitute an admission of any wrongdoing by the Hall entities, which are no longer operating apartment complexes in Arizona.

Horne stated: "Housing discrimination is extremely offensive and my office will always be vigilant to pursue these kinds of matters. Nobody should be denied the opportunity to find housing because of his or her ethnic background, and I am pleased with the results of today's settlement."

According to the lawsuit, Hall agents discriminated against Abdelrahman and Ibrahim because of their race (Arab), national origin (Egyptian) and religion (Muslim) by complicating the application process to discourage them from renting and by inspecting their apartment and their possessions without justification or permission while they were in the process of moving into Villatree. The lawsuit also alleges that Hall agents failed to respond to Abdelrahman and Ibrahim's requests for repairs to their apartment. Finally, the lawsuit alleges that when Abdelrahman and Ibrahim complained about what they perceived to be discriminatory treatment at Villatree, the property manager initiated eviction proceedings against them.

Under the settlement, Abdelrahman and Ibrahim have received \$197,500 in compensation from the Hall entities. The Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office has received \$30,000 to enforce civil rights laws in Arizona. Assistant Attorney General Ann Hobart represented the State in this matter.

The Arizona Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability. Among other provisions of the Act, it is unlawful for a landlord to make statements that indicate the intent to discriminate; to subject a tenant to discriminatory rental terms, conditions or privileges; to coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with a tenant's fair housing rights; and to retaliate against a tenant for asserting such rights. Any person who believes that their civil rights have been violated should call the Arizona Attorney General's Civil Rights Division toll-free statewide at 1-877-491-5742 or toll-free TDD at 1-877-624-8090, or file a complaint online at www.azag.gov.

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