



# News from

Office of the Attorney General  
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## Attorney General

## Richard Blumenthal

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### ***ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS LAW FIRMS, BANKS AND REAL ESTATE COMPANIES TO STOP ILLEGAL EVICTIONS***

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal announced today a new initiative to aid tenants of foreclosed properties -- including cease-and-desist letters urging law firms, real estate companies and banks and loan servicers to stop abrupt and illegal evictions.

Blumenthal's office has received complaints from tenants hastily and illegally forced out of rental homes after their landlords' properties were foreclosed. Evicted tenants are typically current on their rent, but face eviction because of their landlord's financial troubles. In many cases, real estate agents have pressured tenants to leave, without informing them of their rights under federal law.

Some banks begin eviction procedures immediately upon completing foreclosure, despite the consequences for tenants and a federal law that requires a 90-day delay. Vacant properties quickly become rundown and damaged by vandals, decreasing the value of foreclosed properties and surrounding properties.

A federal consumer protection law implemented last year -- The Protecting Tenants At Foreclosure Act of 2009 (PTFA) -- allows all tenants in a foreclosed property to stay in their homes after the completion of a foreclosure action for at least 90 days from the date of notice to vacate the property or until the end of their lease term, whichever is later.

In coordination with legal assistance attorneys, Blumenthal has sent cease-and-desist letters to at least 30 companies that may have engaged in eviction practices that violate PTFA. Blumenthal is notifying the companies of their legal obligations and requesting that they follow this federal law.

Blumenthal was joined at a press conference today by legal aid lawyers and tenants who have faced unlawful evictions.

"Tenants have rights to remain until their lease ends -- rights that deserve respect and enforcement," Blumenthal said. "We're warning banks and real estate interests: foreclosure is not excuse for illegal eviction. These cease-and-desist letters send a message to powerful property owners that foreclosure gives them no right to engage in automatic eviction en masse.

"Mindless and needless automatic evictions benefit no one -- devastating tenants, the neighborhood and the new property owner," Blumenthal said. "Fast-

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**track evictions not only harm tenants, but turn vacant properties into eyesores and even crime havens, diminishing values neighborhood wide.**

**“Tenants should remain in homes as long as possible -- potentially providing extra income to the new property owner, and benefiting everyone.**

**“Tenants in foreclosed properties -- victims of their landlord’s financial failures -- deserve to be treated fairly and lawfully when forced to find a new home. Law firms, realtors and lenders have moral and legal obligations to provide fair notice and time for tenants to find alternative housing after foreclosures. We are alerting law firms, lenders and real estate companies that they must follow this law or face legal action.**

**“Foreclosures devastate property owners, but also tenants whose lives are unfairly uprooted and incredibly inconvenienced. Searching for alternative housing can be difficult, costly and time-consuming -- requiring reasonable advance notice before eviction.**

**“We are putting these companies on notice: follow federal law, and treat tenants fairly.”**

**Blumenthal sent the cease and desist letters to at least 15 bank and mortgage servicers, nine law firms and six real estate companies.**

**Blumenthal lauded the efforts by legal services advocates, including New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, Connecticut Legal Services and Statewide Legal Services.**

**Blumenthal also thanked those in his office working on this initiative, including Assistant Attorneys General Joseph Chambers and Jeremy Pearlman, under the direction of Assistant Attorney General Matthew Budzik, head of the Attorney General’s Finance Department, and Assistant Attorney General Phillip Rosario, head of the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Department.**

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