

March 19, 2009 **INDIANAPOLIS** – Congressman André Carson today decried efforts by online scam artists to take advantage of troubled homeowners seeking help and information about President Obama’s foreclosure prevention plan. Since the announcement of the Making Home Affordable program, several Web sites have been launched purporting to help homeowners modify their loans through the federal program. In reality, these sites are not affiliated with any federal agency and are run by private, for-profit companies looking to charge fees for their services and/or capture homeowner’s credit information.

Along with Internet scams, Congressman Carson also warned of fraudulent foreclosure rescue schemes that solicit homeowners over the phone or even in person by going door-to-door. Companies looking to take advantage of vulnerable families and individuals often use public records of foreclosure filings to target victims.

“It is unconscionable that these scammers would prey on innocent homeowners facing hardship,” Congressman Carson said. “Constituents of the Seventh District and homeowners across our country need to know that there are several free resources available to help people through the mortgage modification and refinancing process.

“Bottom line is no one should have to incur modification fees or counseling fees to successfully lower their mortgage payment through the Making Home Affordable program.”

To fight these unscrupulous acts, Congressman Carson has signed on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1231, the Foreclosure Rescue Fraud Act of 2009, which aims to combat many financial scams aimed at victimizing homeowners facing foreclosure.

Resources for homeowners For homeowners seeking information about the mortgage modification process and program eligibility for the President’s plan, the Congressman recommends the following resources and steps:

- Call your mortgage lender or servicer directly
- Mortgage lenders should be well-briefed on the federal program and can provide information about eligibility for the home loan modification process. Also, they will be able to tell homeowners if their loan is owned by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, which is a determining factor for the refinancing portion of the President’s Making Home Affordable program.

Visiting
www.makinghomeaffordable.gov

– Launched this week by the U.S. Treasury Department, this site is specifically aimed at helping homeowners understand the new foreclosure prevention plan. The hotline number is (888) 955-4674.

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Contacting the Indiana Foreclosure Prevention Network

– This program was created by a partnership between Indiana state government and private sector leaders to provide free assistance to homeowners. The Web site is www.877gethope.org and the phone number is (877) GET-HOPE.

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Contacting Congressman Carson's office

– Constituents can seek assistance by calling (317) 283-6516.

How to tell a scam

Congressman Carson also encouraged the public to become familiar with the techniques and strategies used by perpetrators of fraudulent foreclosure rescue schemes. The Federal Trade Commission, which works to prevent deceptive and unfair business practices, has posted helpful information to spot and avoid these scams. For more details, visit www.ftc.gov/bcp/menus/consumer/credit/mortgage.shtm or call (877) FTC-HELP.

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