



## **TALCB Enforcement Division Assists Law Enforcement in Combating Mortgage Fraud**

*The TALCB Enforcement Division regularly assists outside law enforcement and most recently provided assistance and information to the Collin County District Attorney's Office and the FBI in connection with real estate appraisers connected to a major East Texas mortgage fraud scheme*

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 23, 2010

CONTACT: Betsy Bird  
512-465-3402

The Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board (TALCB)'s Standards and Enforcement Services Division (SES) regularly receives requests for assistance in ongoing state and federal mortgage fraud investigations. HB 716 (80<sup>th</sup> legislative session) created the Texas Residential Mortgage Fraud Task Force, of which TALCB is a member. TALCB's SES Division regularly provides assistance to the Texas State Attorney General, county district attorneys' offices, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Texas Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General, among others. In late 2007, the Collin County District Attorney's Office contacted TALCB SES and requested assistance with several mortgage fraud cases in which appraisers were alleged to be involved. TALCB SES Investigator Jack McComb was already investigating regulatory complaint cases involving some of these same real estate appraisers. TALCB's assistance to Collin County led to the conviction of several of the appraisers.

Now the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Dallas Division and the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas have announced that a federal grand jury has returned a massive indictment against forty individuals in connection with a major East Texas mortgage fraud scheme. The federal indictment includes many of the same individuals for which TALCB SES had assisted Collin County. Included in the indictment are four former TALCB licensed or certified real estate appraisers: Elizabeth Altizer, Pamela Ford, Joshua Melton, and William Doug Mitchell. TALCB revoked all four of these individuals' licenses or certifications in 2008 and 2009. Elizabeth Altizer, Joshua Melton and William Doug Mitchell received final orders of revocation and Pamela Ford voluntarily surrendered her license. None are eligible to seek reapplication as real estate appraisers in Texas.

"I am very pleased that action is being taken by law enforcement authorities when it appears criminal conduct is occurring in real estate and mortgage transactions," TALCB Chairman James Ratliff commented. Deloris Kraft-Longoria, TALCB SES Division Director adds, "we have been working cases on these individuals for many years in cooperation with our law enforcement partners. Unfortunately, appraisal fraud is an integral part of the mortgage fraud schemes that we see all too often at TALCB. In addition to revocation of their credentials as real estate appraisers, these individuals will now face criminal charges for their conduct."

These former real estate appraisers and others charged in the indictment now face various federal criminal charges in connection with the mortgage fraud scheme, including charges of mail fraud, money laundering and conspiracy. (<http://dallas.fbi.gov/dojpressrel/pressrel10/dl031610.htm>) According to the indictment, "the purpose of the scheme was to defraud lending institutions by convincing them to approve mortgage loans for residential properties for which the property values had been fraudulently inflated." An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct returned by a grand jury and the individuals charged are presumed innocent until proven guilty at a future date in federal court.

The mission of TALCB is to protect the public interest by assuring that consumers of real estate appraisal services are served by real estate appraisers qualified in accordance with federal and state law and in sufficient numbers to facilitate the free flow of commerce and industry. More information at: [www.talcb.state.tx.us](http://www.talcb.state.tx.us)

###