
IN THE MATTER OF:

PEDROSO LEGAL SERVICES LLC
a/k/a ELAWNJ.COM
(“Legal Services”)

FILIFE PEDROSO
(“Pedroso”)

(collectively, “Respondents”)

ORDER TO MAKE RESTITUTION

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE
ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST

NOTICE OF INTENT TO IMPOSE
CIVIL PENALTY

AND

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO HEARING

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION

1. The Banking Commissioner (“Commissioner”) is charged with the administration of Sections 36a-671 to 36a-671f, inclusive, of Part II of Chapter 669 of the Connecticut General Statutes, “Debt Adjusters and Debt Negotiation”.

2. Pursuant to the authority granted by Section 36a-17 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner, through the Consumer Credit Division of the Department of Banking, has investigated the activities of Respondents to determine if they have violated, are violating or are about to violate the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner (“Investigation”).

3. As a result of the Investigation, the Commissioner has reason to believe that Respondents have violated Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, in effect prior to October 1, 2017.

4. As a result of the Investigation, the violation alleged by the Commissioner forms the basis to issue an order to make restitution against Respondents pursuant to Sections 36a-671(b) and 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

5. As a result of the Investigation, the violation alleged by the Commissioner forms the basis to issue an order to cease and desist against Respondents pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-52(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

6. As a result of the Investigation, the violation alleged by the Commissioner forms the basis to issue a civil penalty against Respondents pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

II. MATTERS ASSERTED

7. Legal Services is a New Jersey limited liability company with a place of business at 8 Wilson Ave, Newark, New Jersey.

8. Pedroso is an attorney licensed in the State of New Jersey, Attorney ID # 0343981996, and is the managing attorney of Legal Services. Pedroso has never been admitted to practice law in Connecticut.

9. On or about March 29, 2016, a Connecticut mortgagor (“Mortgagor”) met with Pedroso at the office of Legal Services in New Jersey, paid \$4,000 to Respondents and entered into a contract authorizing Respondents to represent the Mortgagor in the modification of such Mortgagor’s residential mortgage loan (“Agreement”).

10. In connection with the Agreement, from March to August 2016, the Mortgagor paid an additional \$6,000 to Respondents for a total of \$10,000 in connection such services. On September 23, 2016, Respondents represented that they concluded Mortgagor’s loan modification services and refunded \$1,800 to the Mortgagor.

11. The sum the Mortgagor paid to Respondents in connection with such services is in excess of the amount that debt negotiators may charge for services related to secured debt pursuant to the Schedule of Maximum Fees established by the Commissioner on or about October 1, 2009 (“Schedule of Maximum Fees”).

12. The Schedule of Maximum Fees provides, in pertinent part, that “[a] debt negotiator of secured debt, including Short Sales and Foreclosure Rescue Services, may impose a fee upon the mortgagor or

debtor for performing debt negotiation services not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500). Such fee shall only be collectable upon the successful completion of all services stated in the debt negotiation service contract”.

13. At no time relevant hereto have Respondents been licensed to engage or offer to engage in debt negotiation in this state, nor did Respondents qualify for an exemption from such licensure.

14. At no time relevant hereto, did the Mortgagor obtain a loan modification as a result of Respondents’ services.

III. STATUTORY BASIS FOR ORDER TO MAKE RESTITUTION, ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST AND IMPOSITION OF CIVIL PENALTY

1. Legal Services’ engaging or offering to engage in debt negotiation in this state without obtaining the required license, as more fully described in paragraphs 7 through 14, inclusive, of the Matters Asserted, constitutes a violation of Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, in effect prior to October 1, 2017. Such violation forms the basis to issue an order to cease and desist against Legal Services pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-52(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, issue an order to make restitution against Legal Services pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and impose a civil penalty against Legal Services pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Section 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes the Commissioner to impose a civil penalty upon Legal Services in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per violation.

2. Pedroso’s engaging or offering to engage in debt negotiation in this state without obtaining the required license, as more fully described in paragraphs 7 through 14, inclusive, of the Matters Asserted, constitutes a violation of Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, in effect prior to October 1, 2017. Such violation forms the basis to issue an order to cease and desist against Pedroso pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-52(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, issue an order to make restitution against Pedroso pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut

General Statutes, and impose a civil penalty against Pedroso pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Section 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes the Commissioner to impose a civil penalty upon Pedroso in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per violation.

**IV. ORDER TO MAKE RESTITUTION,
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST, NOTICE OF INTENT
TO IMPOSE CIVIL PENALTY AND NOTICE OF RIGHT TO HEARING**

WHEREAS, the Commissioner has reason to believe that Respondents have engaged in acts or conduct which forms the basis to issue an order to cease and desist pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-52(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, issue an order to make restitution pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and impose a civil penalty pursuant to Sections 36a-671a(b) and 36a-50(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes;

THE COMMISSIONER THEREFORE ORDERS, pursuant to Section 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, that Pedroso Legal Services LLC and Filipe Pedroso **MAKE RESTITUTION** of any sums obtained as a result of Respondents violating Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes in effect prior to October 1, 2017, plus interest at the legal rate set forth in Section 37-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Specifically, the Commissioner **ORDERS** that: Not later than thirty (30) days from the date this Order to Make Restitution becomes permanent, Pedroso Legal Services LLC and Filipe Pedroso shall, jointly and severally:

1. Repay \$8,200 plus interest to the Connecticut mortgagor identified in Exhibit A attached hereto and repay any other Connecticut debtor who entered into an agreement for debt negotiation services with Respondents on and after October 1, 2009, any fees paid by such Connecticut debtor to Respondents, plus interest. Payments shall be made by cashier's check, certified check or money order; and
2. Provide evidence of such repayments to Carmine Costa, Director, Consumer Credit Division, Department of Banking, 260 Constitution Plaza, Hartford, Connecticut 06103-1800, or carmine.costa@ct.gov.

NOW THEREFORE, notice is hereby given to Legal Services that the Commissioner intends to issue an order requiring Legal Services to **CEASE AND DESIST** from violating Section 36a-671(b) of

the Connecticut General Statutes, and impose a **CIVIL PENALTY** upon Legal Services as set forth herein, subject to Legal Services' right to a hearing on the allegation set forth above.

FURTHER, notice is hereby given to Pedroso that the Commissioner intends to issue an order requiring Pedroso to **CEASE AND DESIST** from violating Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and impose a **CIVIL PENALTY** upon Pedroso as set forth herein, subject to Pedroso's right to a hearing on the allegation set forth above.

A hearing will be granted to each Respondent if a written request for a hearing is received by the Department of Banking, Consumer Credit Division, 260 Constitution Plaza, Hartford, Connecticut 06103-1800 or submitted by e-mail to DOB.hearingsupport@ct.gov within fourteen (14) days following Respondent's receipt of this Order to Make Restitution, Notice of Intent to Issue Order to Cease and Desist, Notice of Intent to Impose Civil Penalty and Notice of Right to Hearing as set forth in Sections 36a-52(a), 36a-50(a) and 36a-50(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes. This Order to Make Restitution, Notice of Intent to Issue Order to Cease and Desist, Notice of Intent to Impose Civil Penalty and Notice of Right to Hearing shall be deemed received on the earlier of the date of actual receipt, or seven (7) days after mailing or sending. To request a hearing, complete and return the enclosed Appearance and Request for Hearing Form to one of the above addresses. If Respondent will not be represented by an attorney at the hearing, please complete the Appearance and Request for Hearing Form as "pro se". Once a written request for a hearing is received, the Commissioner may issue a notification of hearing and designation of hearing officer that acknowledges receipt of a request for a hearing, designates a hearing officer and sets the date of the hearing in accordance with Section 4-177 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 36a-1-21 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. If a hearing is requested, the hearing will be held remotely via videoconference using Microsoft Teams on January 28, 2021, at 10 a.m.

If a hearing is requested, it will be held in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 54 of the Connecticut General Statutes, Executive Order 7B, Section 1, as amended, renewed or superseded, and the Remote Hearing Guidelines, available on the Department's website at <https://portal.ct.gov/dob>, unless

either Respondent fails to appear at the requested hearing. At such hearing, Respondents will have the right to appear and present evidence, rebuttal evidence and argument on all issues of fact and law to be considered by the Commissioner.

If Legal Services does not request a hearing within the time period prescribed or fails to appear at any such hearing, the allegation herein against Legal Services will be deemed admitted. Accordingly, the Order to Make Restitution shall remain in effect and become permanent against Legal Services, and the Commissioner will issue an order that Legal Services cease and desist from violating Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and may order a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per violation be imposed upon Legal Services.

If Pedroso does not request a hearing within the time period prescribed or fails to appear at any such hearing, the allegation herein against Pedroso will be deemed admitted. Accordingly, the Order to Make Restitution shall remain in effect and become permanent against Pedroso, and the Commissioner will issue an order Pedroso cease and desist from violating Section 36a-671(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and may order a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per violation be imposed upon Pedroso.

So ordered at Hartford, Connecticut,
this 19th day of November 2020.

/s/

Jorge L. Perez
Banking Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on this 20th day of November 2020, I caused to be mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, the foregoing Order to Make Restitution, Notice of Intent to Issue Order to Cease and Desist, Notice of Intent to Impose Civil Penalty and Notice of Right to Hearing to Pedroso Legal Services LLC a/k/a ELAWNJ.COM, 8 Wilson Ave, Newark, New Jersey, Certified Mail No. 70191640000015848617, and 892 US Highway 22, 2nd Floor, Somerville New Jersey, 08876, Certified Mail No. 70191640000015848501; and to Filipe Pedroso, 892 US Highway 22, 2nd Floor, Somerville New Jersey, 08876, Certified Mail No. 70191640000015848624.

/s/
Carmen Calderon