

714F.9 Enforcement.

1. *Remedies.* A violation of this chapter is an unlawful practice pursuant to section 714.16, and all the remedies of section 714.16 are available for such an action. A private cause of action brought under this chapter by a foreclosed homeowner is in the public interest. A foreclosed homeowner may bring an action for a violation of this chapter. If the court finds a violation of this chapter, the court shall award to the foreclosed homeowner actual damages, appropriate equitable relief, and the costs of the action, and shall award reasonable fees to the foreclosed homeowner's attorney. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an action shall not be brought on the basis of a violation of this chapter except by a foreclosed homeowner against whom the violation was committed or by the attorney general. This limitation does not apply to administrative action by the superintendent of the banking division of the department of commerce.

2. *Exemplary damages.* In a private right of action for a violation of this chapter, the court may award exemplary damages. If the court determines that an award of exemplary damages is appropriate, the amount of exemplary damages awarded shall not be less than one and one-half times the foreclosed homeowner's actual damages. Any claim for exemplary damages brought pursuant to this section must be commenced within four years after the date of the alleged violation.

3. *Remedies cumulative.* The remedies provided in this section are cumulative and do not restrict any remedy that is otherwise available. The provisions of this chapter are not exclusive and are in addition to any other requirements, rights, remedies, and penalties provided by law. No action under this section shall affect the rights in the foreclosed property held by a good faith purchaser for value.

4. *Criminal penalty.* A foreclosure purchaser who engages in a practice which would operate as a fraud or deceit upon a foreclosed homeowner is guilty of a serious misdemeanor. Prosecution or conviction for any one of the violations does not bar prosecution or conviction for any other offenses.

5. *Failure of transaction.* Failure of the parties to complete the reconveyance transaction, in the absence of additional misconduct, shall not subject a foreclosure purchaser to the criminal penalties under this chapter.

6. *Stay of eviction action.*

a. A court hearing an eviction action against a foreclosed homeowner must issue an automatic stay, without imposition of a bond, if the foreclosed homeowner makes a prima facie showing that all of the following apply:

(1) The foreclosed homeowner has done any of the following:

(a) Commenced an action concerning a foreclosure reconveyance.

(b) Asserts a defense that the property that is the subject of the eviction action is also the subject of a foreclosure reconveyance in violation of this chapter.

(c) Asserts a claim or affirmative defense of fraud, false pretense, false promise, misrepresentation, misleading statement, or deceptive practice, in connection with a foreclosure reconveyance.

(2) The foreclosed homeowner owned the residence in foreclosure.

(3) The foreclosed homeowner conveyed title to the residence in foreclosure to a third party upon a promise that the foreclosed homeowner would be allowed to occupy the residence in foreclosure or other real property in which the foreclosure purchaser or a person acting in participation with the foreclosure purchaser has an interest and that the residence in foreclosure or other real property would be the subject of a foreclosure reconveyance.

(4) Since the conveyance, the foreclosed homeowner has continuously occupied the residence in foreclosure or other real property in which the foreclosure purchaser or a person acting in participation with the foreclosure purchaser has an interest.

b. For purposes of this subsection, notarized affidavits are acceptable means of proof to meet the foreclosed homeowner's burden. Upon good cause shown, a foreclosed homeowner may request and the court may grant up to an additional two weeks to produce evidence required to make the prima facie showing.

c. A court may award to a plaintiff a penalty of up to five hundred dollars upon a showing that the foreclosed homeowner filed a frivolous claim or asserted a frivolous defense.

d. The automatic stay expires upon the later of any of the following:

(1) The failure of the foreclosed homeowner to commence an action in a court of competent jurisdiction in connection with a foreclosed reconveyance transaction within ninety days after the issuance of the stay.

(2) The issuance of an order lifting the stay by a court hearing claims related to the foreclosure reconveyance.

2008 Acts, ch 1125, §18, 19; 2009 Acts, ch 133, §183

Referred to in §714F.8