

Document Request Follows Disclosure of Foreclosure Party Photos

Washington, DC (Nov. 4, 2011) – Today, Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings [sent a letter](#) to the law firm of Steven J. Baum requesting records, documents, and communications relating to allegations of improper and potentially illegal actions in the processing of foreclosures.

“Given that your firm represents some of the nation’s largest mortgage servicers,” Cummings wrote, “these revelations are disturbing. If true, they demonstrate a culture of disdain for families suffering foreclosure and a disregard for the rule of law.”

Cummings has been investigating allegations of the firm’s misconduct since February. His latest request follows a [New York Times column](#) revealing photographs from a Halloween party in 2010 during which employees dressed as homeless people. According to a former employee, the photographs “showed an appalling lack of compassion toward the homeowners” and “are an accurate representation of the firm’s mind-set.”

The column also reported that the firm is “under investigation by the New York State Attorney General,” is a defendant in a class action suit claiming that the firm “consistently failed to file certain papers that are necessary to allow for a state-mandated settlement conference that can lead to modification,” and has been described by a New York State Supreme Court Judge as “operating in a parallel universe, unrelated to the real universe.”

On [February 25, 2011](#), Cummings launched a major investigation of mortgage servicer abuses that included a request to the Inspector General of the Federal Housing Finance Agency to investigate [allegations against this firm and others.](#)

In his letter today, Cummings requested that the firm provide all documents relating to:

- false or misleading foreclosure documents, “robo-signed” documents, or improper mortgage assignments;
- attempts by the firm to foreclose on borrowers who were attempting to obtain, or who had obtained, loan modifications;
- instances in which the firm illegally or improperly charged for foreclosure settlement conferences, overcharged on foreclosure fees, or attempted to persuade foreclosure defendants to waive their legal rights;
- preparing for, carrying out, or communicating about the firm’s 2010 Halloween party; and
- instances in which the firm compensated Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, or a client for improper foreclosure practices.