

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Attorney General Hector Balderas Issues a Debt Collection Advisory
Warning New Mexicans About Predatory Collection Practices**

Santa Fe, NM---Attorney General Hector Balderas today issued an advisory to New Mexicans warning them about predatory debt collection practices from companies that attempt a variety of tactics to prey on New Mexican consumers. These practices include attempts to collect debts that do not exist, falsely reporting consumers to consumer credit agencies, and generally using threats or intimidation in an attempt to extract money from consumers. The Attorney General issued this advisory after recently suing national debt collectors for these practices and after these companies received millions of dollars in federal Paycheck Protection Program funds.

“It is absurd that law enforcement is holding these companies accountable for preying on our families, while Congress is actively funding their efforts,” said Attorney General Balderas. “New Mexican consumers must remain vigilant and report any suspicious debt collection activities to law enforcement; and we will take swift action to hold them accountable for any bad acts.”

As covered by the Washington Post, the Office of the Attorney General recently sued several debt collectors, including Capio Asset Servicing, a national debt collection firm that has engaged in predatory debt collection practices. As reported, the same firm is the recipient of millions of dollars in federal COVID-19 stimulus aid. The full story on this particular company and these issues can be found here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/01/15/debt-collectors-payday-ppp/>

The Office of the Attorney General warns New Mexicans that they should take precautions if anyone contacts them attempting to collect a debt. The office offers the following basic tips to consumers:

- Only deal with a company you have personally interacted with. If a debt collector says they represent that company make them demonstrate proof that they are affiliated;
- Be on the lookout for any communication that is intimidating in nature, including threats to report you or aggressive behavior toward you;

- Be knowledgeable about the amounts you do owe, and beware of anyone who tells you that you owe more than that amount;
- Debt collectors are prohibited from contacting you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m., unless you agree to it.
- They also can't contact you at work if they're told you're not allowed to get calls there;
- If the debt they are trying to collect is old, ask for them to verify that it's not outside the statutes of limitations. Don't let them force you into paying on something you're unsure of;
- Be vigilant and do not be afraid to ask questions and ask them to provide information.

If you believe that you have been the victim of predatory debt collection practices, or if your rights have been violated, please contact the Office of the Attorney General at www.nmag.gov, or by phone at 1-844-255-9210.

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