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## **MADIGAN: SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE**

### ***Attorney General Urges Veterans Facing Foreclosure To Call Her Office***

Chicago — In observance of Veterans Day, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today thanked military service members and their families for their sacrifice and reminded veterans about the services her office provides, with a particular emphasis on services for military families struggling to avoid the mortgage crisis.

"Veterans Day gives us an opportunity to show our troops how much we value and honor their courageous service in defending our freedoms," Madigan said. "But we should use every day as an opportunity to protect the rights of veterans and the members of the military. Under our laws, veterans and military service members are entitled to certain benefits that recognize their commitment to our country. My office is dedicated to ensuring that they receive the benefits they have earned."

Madigan noted that many military families, like families across America, are struggling to make their mortgage payments. "Like so many Americans, military families have been hit with skyrocketing mortgage rates," Madigan said. "I want military families to know that we are here to help them work out a solution and avoid foreclosure."

Madigan cited the case of Maj. Rebecca Goodum, who suffered permanent injuries during her deployment to Iraq. While Maj. Goodum served on active duty with the U.S. Army, Maj. Goodum's mortgage rate on her Naperville, Ill., home was reduced under the Service Members Civil Relief Act. But after her injury and subsequent retirement, Maj. Goodum's adjustable loan rate skyrocketed, and, because she was no longer covered under active duty benefits, many of her expenses, including some medical bills, began to accumulate.

At risk of losing her family's home, Maj. Goodum called Attorney General Madigan's **Homeowner Referral Helpline** (1-866-544-7151). With assistance from Madigan's office, the Goodum family was able to obtain a fixed-rate mortgage and put some of those savings toward paying for Maj. Goodum's care, rehabilitation and other expenses.

"My family had tried unsuccessfully for several months to modify our loan with our lender. We were exhausted and did not have much hope left when we called the Attorney General's office. To our surprise, they accomplished what we could not do in months in a matter of weeks, and they helped us save our home," Maj. Goodum said. "I'm sharing my story to help create greater awareness about the benefits and protections afforded to veterans. It's so important that my fellow service members realize that these resources are available to them."

Madigan said veterans can learn about services available to them by calling her office's **Veterans Hotline at 1-800-382-3000** (TTY: 800-964-3013). Through the Veterans Rights Bureau, the Attorney General's office offers the following resources to veterans and military services members:

- **Case Advocacy.** Because the laws and regulations governing cases before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can be complex, Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau offers help to veterans to understand their due process rights in filing claims for compensation or pension benefits.
- **Health Outreach.** Attorneys from the Veterans Rights Bureau staff make regular visits to area VA hospitals to ensure that patients' needs are being met.

- **Education Outreach.** Veterans are impacted by many of the same issues that affect other consumers, seniors and persons with disabilities. For that reason, Veterans Rights Bureau attorneys offer educational programs on these issues. For the date and location of the next event, call the Veterans Hotline.

In addition to these services, Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau has developed a series of initiatives designed to support the 2,700 members and families of the 33rd Brigade Combat Team, which left Illinois for Afghanistan this year in the largest overseas deployment of Illinois troops since World War II. Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau has held informational seminars for the Brigade's service members and their families to help create greater awareness about state and federal benefits and protections, including re-employment rights, monetary benefits for survivors and support resources available to service members and their families before, during and after deployment.

Attorney General Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau is dedicated to ensuring that veterans receive the benefits they have earned. The bureau provides veterans with assistance, including case advocacy, health outreach and educational forums. For more information about Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau, please visit <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html>.

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