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## JUSTICE NEWS

### Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West Speaks at Pen and Pad Briefing Announcing Record Civil FY 2012 Recoveries

Washington, D.C. ~ Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Good morning, and thank you for joining us. I'm Tony West, the Acting Associate Attorney General. As the third-ranking official at the Department of Justice, I can tell you that protecting taxpayers from fraud, waste, and abuse has been over the last four years and remains one of the Attorney General's top priorities. It is a commitment that this Administration has had since Day One, and today is further evidence of that as we announce the results we've achieved in our False Claims Act enforcement efforts over the past year.

I am pleased to announce that in fiscal year 2012, the Justice Department's Civil Division, working with U.S. Attorneys' Office across the country, recovered nearly \$5 billion [\$4.959 billion] in settlements and judgments under the False Claims Act – a new record for a single year. That figure exceeds the previous one-year record (\$3.2 billion) by \$1.7 billion.

FY 2012 was the conclusion of a record-setting four-year period. Since January 2009, we have obtained a total of \$13.3 billion in False Claims Act cases, the largest four-year total in the Department's history. That is more than a third of the total recoveries under the Act since it was amended a quarter of a century ago in 1986.

I think this is the kind of success that comes from making the recovery of taxpayer dollars a high enforcement priority, and here at the Department that has meant doing three things: aggressive use of a powerful statutory tool; creating strong partnerships; and supporting the civil frauds work of committed, hard-working attorneys and staff.

The False Claims Act is, quite simply, the most powerful tool that we have to deter and redress fraud. Vigorous enforcement of the Act allows us to protect not only taxpayer dollars, but also the integrity of important government programs on which so many Americans rely – whether you're a Medicare recipient seeking reassurance that the medical care you're receiving is appropriate and safe, or a soldier in Iraq who is depending on the protection of body armor, aggressive enforcement of the False Claims Act matters to you.

We can thank the vision and support of people like Senators Patrick Leahy and Charles Grassley, Congressman Howard Berman, and dedicated Justice Department employees like our colleague Mike Hertz, who passed away this past May, whose leadership in authoring, sponsoring and shaping legislation to strengthen the False Claim Act has made our success in this effort possible.

And we would not see the record-breaking results we're announcing today had it not been for the strong partnerships we have built in recent years – collaborations like the Heath Care Fraud and Enforcement Action Team, or "HEAT," that the Attorney General and Secretary Sebelius launched in May 2009 to enhance cooperation between our agencies and focus on fighting health care fraud like never before. This partnership led to our recovering \$3 billion in health care fraud actions under the False Claims Act in FY 2012 – a record for a single year.

Or collaborations like the President's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, which brought together the resources needed to recover \$1.4 billion in housing and mortgage-related cases under the False Claims Act in FY 2012 – another record for a single year. Included in that figure is the \$900 million in False Claims Act recoveries that resulted from the historic \$25 billion federal-state settlement with the nation's five largest mortgage servicers.

And finally, today's announcement reflects what we can expect when we unleash and support the talent, drive, creativity and commitment of the people who work so hard day in and day out to protect taxpayers and the public fisc. Invaluable contributions are made by too many to thank here today – from our federal agency partners who work side-by-side with us; to the attorneys, paralegals, investigators, and support staff in the Civil Division and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the nation who are the backbone of our False Claims Act work.

We are also indebted to the brave citizens who step forward to report fraud – often at great personal risk. In FY 2012, we set a new record by recovering more than \$3.3 billion under the *qui tam* provisions of the False Claims Act. Last year, whistleblowers filed nearly 650 actions – more cases than ever before under the Act.

I'll now turn things over to Stuart Delery, the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for

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