



# News Release

Attorney General Robert E. Cooper, Jr.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATE REACHES AGREEMENT WITH ELMER VIRULA, TPS TAX PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC.,  
AND OFFICE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC.**

Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper and Division of Consumer Affairs Director Mary Clement announced today that a man and his companies alleged to have provided legal services without a license to members of the Hispanic immigrant community have agreed to stop the alleged unlawful conduct.

Additionally, TPS Tax Professional Services, Inc., and Office Professional Services, Inc. have agreed to pay restitution to consumers that paid money for legal or marriage services totaling approximately \$25,000. Ten consumers who previously came forward will receive a refund within 60 days. Additional eligible consumers who come forward within a year from today's date will also be awarded restitution and will be paid within 60 days of notification to the defendants. The agreement also calls for the defendants to pay \$10,000 to the State in attorneys' fees, costs and civil penalties. Circuit Judge Hamilton Gayden, Jr. approved the settlement, which also provides for additional attorneys' fees, costs and civil penalties of \$60,000 that will be paid if the defendants violate the settlement.

"The State takes all allegations of the unauthorized practice of law very seriously." Attorney General Bob Cooper said. "I am pleased that this matter has been resolved in a way that will benefit consumers."

In 2008, the State sued Elmer Virula, TPS Tax Professional Services, Inc., and Office Professional Services, Inc. alleging violations of the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act and Unauthorized Practice and Improper Conduct statutes. The State's lawsuit alleged the defendants falsely told consumers that Elmer Virula is an attorney and certified public accountant in the State of Tennessee. The complaint also alleged the defendants misled consumers, claiming they could provide legal services such as immigration document preparation and offered marriage licenses and certificates, which were falsified.

Director Clement said "Consumers who paid Elmer Virula, TPS Tax Professional Services, Inc., or Office Professional Services, Inc. for legal services or marriage licenses should contact the Division of Consumer Affairs (615) 741-4737 or toll-free within Tennessee at 1-877-275-7396 by no later than one year from today."

The State also encourages Tennesseans in need of an attorney to confirm the attorney is in good standing and licensed to practice law in the state of Tennessee by contacting the Board of Professional Responsibility at (615) 361-7500.

To see a copy of the State's filings, go to:

<http://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/cases/virula/virula.html>