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## For Immediate Release

### **Consumer and Industry Advocates Highlight Deed Fraud Prevention**

*States should strengthen protections for homeowners and buyers*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 7, 2024** – The American Land Title Association (ALTA), AARP, Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA), National Association of Realtors® (NAR), National Notary Association (NNA) and Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) released a [new issue brief](#) with recommendations to help combat the rise in deed fraud.

Although deed fraud can include a variety of real estate-related crimes, most schemes involve the impersonation of a property owner and the recording of fake or forged documents in local land records. These crimes result in legal costs, reduction in equity or property value and even property loss. According to [the Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#), fraud losses in 2023 cost U.S. consumers more than \$10 billion, of which \$2.7 billion is attributed to imposter scams.

“Protecting the property rights of all Americans—and what is likely their largest financial investment—is of utmost importance,” said Elizabeth Blosser, vice president of government affairs at ALTA. “The amount of money lost to deed fraud and other real estate-related scams simply is not acceptable. We must combat these threats.”

“Older Americans are at higher risk of deed theft and the results are financially and emotionally catastrophic,” said Jenn Jones, vice president of financial security and livable communities at AARP. “We must do more to protect unsuspecting homeowners and homebuyers against criminals. In a world with increasingly rampant fraud, educating the public and advocating for stronger local and state consumer protections is critical.”

The issue brief outlines numerous ways to help prevent and mitigate deed fraud, including:

- Providing identity verification options for notarizations performed in the physical presence of the notary
- Providing better security for access to public records
- Requiring continuing education for real estate professionals and notaries

- Allowing local government offices to report suspected fraudulent documents to law enforcement
- Offering property owners free access to property recording notification systems

“Deed fraud, along with other real estate crimes, remains pervasive,” NAR said. “The National Association of Realtors®, along with other industry leaders, are committed to providing continuing education and resources to support consumers and industry professionals in understanding this issue and working collaboratively to combat these real estate scams.”

“The National Notary Association believes these owner/seller impersonation deed fraud policy recommendations are reasonable and necessary steps that should be adopted to protect property owners, real estate professionals and even Notaries who are victims of these crimes,” said Bill Anderson, vice president of government affairs at NNA. “The NNA urges Notaries in every state to learn the warning signs of owner/seller impersonation deed fraud and be vigilant in verifying the identities of all grantors seeking notarization of real property convenience deeds.”

“PRIA is proud to partner with these other great organizations as we continue to battle the topic of deed fraud,” said PRIA President Dan Shmukler. “Collaboration is a key mechanism to solve any problem, and deed fraud has impacted and can impact anyone. PRIA looks forward to bringing its resources and knowledge to this conversation.”

To support victims of these crimes, ALTA, AARP, MBA, NAR, NNA and PRIA are calling for legislatures to strengthen data gathering needed to help law enforcement more easily identify deed fraud victims; increase the resources given to local, state and federal law enforcement to combat this growing threat; and provide resources and expedited processes for victims to reestablish title in the legitimate owner’s name.

Read the issue brief, [What is Deed Fraud](#).

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The [American Land Title Association](#), founded in 1907, is a national trade association representing more than 6,000 title insurance companies, title and settlement agents, independent abstracters, title searchers and real estate attorneys.

The Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA) is the national association representing the real estate finance industry, an industry that employs more than 275,000 people in virtually every community in the country. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the association works to ensure the continued strength of the nation’s residential and commercial real estate markets, to expand homeownership, and to extend access to affordable housing to all Americans. MBA promotes fair and ethical lending practices and fosters professional excellence among real estate finance employees through a wide range of educational programs and a variety of publications. Its membership of more than 2,000 companies includes all elements of real estate finance: independent mortgage banks, mortgage brokers, commercial banks, thrifts, REITs, Wall Street conduits, life insurance companies, credit unions and others in the mortgage lending field. For additional information, visit MBA’s website: [www.mba.org](http://www.mba.org).

The [National Association of REALTORS®](#) is America's largest trade association, representing 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries. The term REALTOR® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

Established in 1957, the [National Notary Association](#) (NNA) is the leading professional authority on the American Notary office and is dedicated to educating, serving and advocating for the nation's 4.4 million notaries. The NNA published the *Model Notary Act* to help lawmakers enact effective legislation and created *The Notary Public Code of Professional Responsibility*, a standard for best practices and professional conduct. To learn more, visit [NationalNotary.org](#).

[PRIA](#) develops and promotes national standards and best practices for the property records industry by:

- Identifying appropriate opportunities for collaboration among industry stakeholders
- Developing recommendations for standards and best practices
- Encouraging and supporting the adoption of such standards and practices
- Providing a clearinghouse for property-records-related information
- Educating members, industry stakeholders and the public about the property records industry

For more information about PRIA, visit [www.pria.us](http://www.pria.us).