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Attorney General Griffin Secures More Than \$11 Million in Civil Penalties against Former Owners of Big Country Chateau

Griffin: 'Arkansans will not tolerate deceptive trade practices, and there are consequences for violating our laws'

LITTLE ROCK – Attorney General Tim Griffin released the following statement announcing a Pulaski County Circuit Court order requiring the former owners of Big Country Chateau to pay the State of Arkansas \$11,236,000:

“I am pleased with the outcome of this case, as the court has ordered the former owners of Big Country Chateau to pay \$11,236,000 in civil penalties for 5,110 violations of the Arkansas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (ADTPA). The court also has revoked the Arkansas business license of Apex Big Chateau AR, LLC, which is the only current Arkansas business license held by Big Country Chateau’s former owners. This ensures they cannot prey on more innocent Arkansans with their deceptive and neglectful business practices.

“Successfully prosecuting this lawsuit was one of my top priorities when I took office as Attorney General in January 2023, and it set the tone for my office’s aggressive enforcement of the ADTPA in the years since. Big Country Chateau’s owners had charged utility fees to their tenants and then withheld payment to utility companies, thereby putting tenants at risk of having

their utilities shut off. Our lawsuit also included their practice of knowingly renting units with code enforcement violations.

“I am grateful to Assistant Attorney General Amanda Wentz for her tireless and persevering work on this case, as well as to my entire Public Protection Division for their diligence and dedication. As the former owners of Big Country Chateau have now learned, Arkansans will not tolerate deceptive trade practices, and there are consequences for violating our laws.”

About Attorney General Tim Griffin

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state’s 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas’s Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin is currently an officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard and holds the rank of colonel. Griffin served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master’s degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to

practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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