

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate House

Comm: RCS 02/27/2012

The Committee on Banking and Insurance (Hays) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause and insert:

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 95.11, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (h) is added to subsection (5) of that section, to read:

- 95.11 Limitations other than for the recovery of real property.—Actions other than for recovery of real property shall be commenced as follows:
 - (2) WITHIN FIVE YEARS.-
 - (b) A legal or equitable action on a contract, obligation,

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or liability founded on a written instrument, except for an action to enforce a claim against a payment bond, which shall be governed by the applicable provisions of ss. 255.05(10) and 713.23(1)(e), and except for actions for a deficiency judgment governed by paragraph (5)(h).

- (5) WITHIN ONE YEAR.
- (h) An action to enforce a claim of a deficiency related to a note secured by a mortgage against a residential property that is a one-family to four-family dwelling unit. The limitations period shall commence on the 11th day after the foreclosure sale or the day after the mortgagee accepts a deed in lieu of foreclosure.

Section 2. The amendment to s. 95.11, Florida Statutes, made by this act shall apply to any action commenced on or after July 1, 2012, regardless of when the cause of action accrued, except that any action that would not have been barred under s. 95.11(2)(b), Florida Statutes, prior to the amendments made by this act may be commenced no later than 5 years after the action accrued and in no event later than July 1, 2013, and if the action is not commenced by that date, it is barred by the amendments made by this act.

Section 3. Section 702.015, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

- 702.015 Elements of complaint; lost, destroyed, or stolen note affidavit.-
- (1) The Legislature intends that the requirements of this section are to expedite the foreclosure process by ensuring initial disclosure of a plaintiff's status and the facts supporting that status and thereby ensuring the availability of

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documents necessary to the prosecution of the case. This section is not intended to modify existing law regarding standing or real parties in interest.

- (2) A complaint that seeks to foreclose a mortgage or other lien on residential real property, including individual units of condominiums and cooperatives, designed principally for occupation by from one to four families, but not including an interest in a timeshare property, which secures a promissory note must:
- (a) Contain affirmative allegations expressly made by the plaintiff at the time the proceeding is commenced that the plaintiff is the holder of the original note secured by the mortgage; or
- (b) Allege with specificity the factual basis by which the plaintiff is a person entitled to enforce the note under s. 673.3011.
- (3) If a party has been delegated the authority to institute a mortgage foreclosure action on behalf of the holder of the note, the complaint shall describe the authority of the plaintiff and identify, with specificity, the document that grants the plaintiff the authority to act on behalf of the holder of the note. This subsection is intended to require initial disclosure of status and pertinent facts and not to modify law regarding standing or real parties in interest.
- (4) If the plaintiff is in physical possession of the original promissory note, the plaintiff must file with the court, contemporaneously with and as a condition precedent to the filing of the complaint for foreclosure, certification, under penalty of perjury, that the plaintiff is in physical

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possession of the original promissory note. The certification must set forth the physical location of the note, the name and title of the individual giving the certification, the name of the person who personally verified such physical possession, and the time and date on which the possession was verified. Correct copies of the note and all allonges to the note must be attached to the certification. The original note and the allonges must be filed with the court before the entry of any judgment of foreclosure or judgment on the note.

- (5) If the plaintiff seeks to enforce a lost, destroyed, or stolen instrument, an affidavit executed under penalty of perjury must be attached to the complaint. The affidavit must:
- (a) Detail a clear chain of all endorsements or assignments of the promissory note that is the subject of the action.
- (b) Set forth facts showing that the plaintiff is entitled to enforce a lost, destroyed, or stolen instrument pursuant to s. 673.3091.
- (c) Include as exhibits to the affidavit such copies of the note and the allonges to the note, audit reports showing physical receipt of the original note, or other evidence of the acquisition, ownership, and possession of the note as may be available to the plaintiff.
- (6) The court may sanction the plaintiff for failure to comply with this section, but any noncompliance with this section does not affect the validity of a foreclosure sale or title to real property subsequent to a foreclosure sale.
- Section 4. Section 702.06, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
 - 702.06 Deficiency decree; common-law suit to recover

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deficiency.—In all suits for the foreclosure of mortgages heretofore or hereafter executed the entry of a deficiency decree for any portion of a deficiency, should one exist, may not exceed the difference between the judgment amount or, in the case of a short sale, the outstanding debt and the fair market value of the property on the date of sale., shall be within the sound judicial discretion of the court, but The complainant shall also have the right to sue at common law to recover such deficiency, unless the court in the foreclosure action has granted or denied a claim for a deficiency judgment provided no suit at law to recover such deficiency shall be maintained against the original mortgagor in cases where the mortgage is for the purchase price of the property involved and where the original mortgagee becomes the purchaser thereof at foreclosure sale and also is granted a deficiency decree against the original mortgagor.

Section 5. Section 702.10, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

702.10 Order to show cause; entry of final judgment of foreclosure; payment during foreclosure.-

(1) A lienholder After a complaint in a foreclosure proceeding has been filed, the mortgagee may request an order to show cause for the entry of final judgment in a foreclosure action. For purposes of this section, the term "lienholder" includes the plaintiff and a defendant to the action who holds a lien encumbering the property or a defendant who, by virtue of its status as a condominium association, cooperative association, or homeowners' association, may file a lien against the real property subject to foreclosure. Upon filing, and the

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court shall immediately review the request and the court file in chambers and without a hearing complaint. If, upon examination of the court file complaint, the court finds that the complaint is verified, complies with s. 702.015, and alleges a cause of action to foreclose on real property, the court shall promptly issue an order directed to the other parties named in the action defendant to show cause why a final judgment of foreclosure should not be entered.

- (a) The order shall:
- 1. Set the date and time for a hearing on the order to show cause. However, The date for the hearing may not occur be set sooner than the later of 20 days after the service of the order to show cause or 45 days after the service of the initial complaint. When service is obtained by publication, the date for the hearing may not be set sooner than 55 30 days after the first publication. The hearing must be held within 60 days after the date of service. Failure to hold the hearing within such time does not affect the validity of the order to show cause or the jurisdiction of the court to issue subsequent orders.
- 2. Direct the time within which service of the order to show cause and the complaint must be made upon the defendant.
- 3. State that the filing of defenses by a motion, responsive pleading, affidavits, or other papers or by a verified or sworn answer at or before the hearing to show cause may constitute constitutes cause for the court not to enter the attached final judgment.
- 4. State that a the defendant has the right to file affidavits or other papers before at the time of the hearing to show cause and may appear personally or by way of an attorney at



the hearing.

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- 5. State that, if a the defendant files defenses by a motion, a verified or sworn answer, affidavits, or other papers or appears personally or by way of an attorney at the time of the hearing, the hearing time will may be used to hear and consider the defendant's motion, answer, affidavits, other papers, and other evidence and argument as may be presented by the defendant or the defendant's attorney. The order shall also state that the court may enter an order of final judgment of foreclosure at the hearing. If such a determination is entered, the court shall enter a final judgment of foreclosure ordering the clerk of the court to conduct a foreclosure sale.
- 6. State that, if a the defendant fails to appear at the hearing to show cause or fails to file defenses by a motion or by a verified or sworn answer or files an answer not contesting the foreclosure, such the defendant may be considered to have waived the right to a hearing, and in such case, the court may enter a default against such defendant and, if appropriate, a final judgment of foreclosure ordering the clerk of the court to conduct a foreclosure sale.
- 7. State that if the mortgage provides for reasonable attorney attorney's fees and the requested attorney attorney's fees do not exceed 3 percent of the principal amount owed at the time of filing the complaint, it is unnecessary for the court to hold a hearing or adjudge the requested attorney attorney's fees to be reasonable.
- 8. Attach the form of the proposed final judgment of foreclosure which the movant requests the court to will enter, if the defendant waives the right to be heard at the hearing on

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the order to show cause. The form may contain blanks for the court to enter the amounts due.

- 9. Require the party seeking final judgment mortgagee to serve a copy of the order to show cause on the other parties the mortgagor in the following manner:
- a. If a party the mortgagor has been personally served with the complaint and original process, or the other party is the plaintiff in the action, service of the order to show cause on that party order may be made in the manner provided in the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.
- b. If a defendant the mortgagor has not been personally served with the complaint and original process, the order to show cause, together with the summons and a copy of the complaint, shall be served on the party mortgagor in the same manner as provided by law for original process. Service of the complaint and original process by mail or publication is not personal service for purposes of this subparagraph.

Any final judgment of foreclosure entered under this subsection is for in rem relief only. Nothing in This subsection does not shall preclude the entry of a deficiency judgment where otherwise allowed by law. It is the intent of the Legislature that this alternative procedure may run simultaneously with other court procedures.

(b) The right to be heard at the hearing to show cause is waived if a the defendant, after being served as provided by law with an order to show cause, engages in conduct that clearly shows that the defendant has relinquished the right to be heard on that order. The defendant's failure to file defenses by a

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motion or by a sworn or verified answer, affidavits, or other papers or to appear personally or by way of an attorney at the hearing duly scheduled on the order to show cause presumptively constitutes conduct that clearly shows that the defendant has relinquished the right to be heard. If a defendant files defenses by a motion, or by a verified or sworn answer, affidavits, or other papers at or before the hearing, such action may constitute constitutes cause and may preclude precludes the entry of a final judgment at the hearing to show cause.

- (c) In a mortgage foreclosure proceeding, when a final default judgment of foreclosure has been entered against the mortgagor and the note or mortgage provides for the award of reasonable attorney attorney's fees, it is unnecessary for the court to hold a hearing or adjudge the requested attorney attorney's fees to be reasonable if the fees do not exceed 3 percent of the principal amount owed on the note or mortgage at the time of filing, even if the note or mortgage does not specify the percentage of the original amount that would be paid as liquidated damages.
- (d) If the court finds that all defendants have the defendant has waived the right to be heard as provided in paragraph (b), the court shall promptly enter a final judgment of foreclosure without the need for further hearing if the plaintiff has shown entitlement to a final judgment and upon the filing with the court of the original note, satisfaction of the conditions for establishment of a lost note, or upon a showing to the court that the obligation to be foreclosed is not evidenced by a promissory note or other negotiable instrument.

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If the court finds that a the defendant has not waived the right to be heard on the order to show cause, the court shall then determine whether there is cause not to enter a final judgment of foreclosure. If the court finds that the defendant has not shown cause, the court shall promptly enter a judgment of foreclosure. If the time allotted for the hearing is insufficient, the court may announce at the hearing a date and time for the continued hearing. Only the parties who appear, individually or through an attorney, at the initial hearing must be notified of the date and time of the continued hearing.

- (2) This subsection does not apply to foreclosure of an owner-occupied residence. As part of any other In an action for foreclosure, and in addition to any other relief that the court may award other than residential real estate, the plaintiff the mortgagee may request that the court enter an order directing the mortgagor defendant to show cause why an order to make payments during the pendency of the foreclosure proceedings or an order to vacate the premises should not be entered.
 - (a) The order shall:
- 1. Set the date and time for hearing on the order to show cause. However, the date for the hearing may shall not be set sooner than 20 days after the service of the order. If Where service is obtained by publication, the date for the hearing may shall not be set sooner than 30 days after the first publication.
- 2. Direct the time within which service of the order to show cause and the complaint shall be made upon each the defendant.
 - 3. State that a the defendant has the right to file

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affidavits or other papers at the time of the hearing and may appear personally or by way of an attorney at the hearing.

- 4. State that, if a the defendant fails to appear at the hearing to show cause and fails to file defenses by a motion or by a verified or sworn answer, the defendant is may be deemed to have waived the right to a hearing and in such case the court may enter an order to make payment or vacate the premises.
- 5. Require the movant mortgagee to serve a copy of the order to show cause on the defendant mortgagor in the following manner:
- a. If a defendant the mortgagor has been served with the complaint and original process, service of the order may be made in the manner provided in the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.
- b. If a defendant the mortgager has not been served with the complaint and original process, the order to show cause, together with the summons and a copy of the complaint, shall be served on the defendant mortgagor in the same manner as provided by law for original process.
- (b) The right of a defendant to be heard at the hearing to show cause is waived if the defendant, after being served as provided by law with an order to show cause, engages in conduct that clearly shows that the defendant has relinquished the right to be heard on that order. A The defendant's failure to file defenses by a motion or by a sworn or verified answer or to appear at the hearing duly scheduled on the order to show cause presumptively constitutes conduct that clearly shows that the defendant has relinquished the right to be heard.
- (c) If the court finds that a the defendant has waived the right to be heard as provided in paragraph (b), the court may

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promptly enter an order requiring payment in the amount provided in paragraph (f) or an order to vacate.

- (d) If the court finds that the mortgagor has not waived the right to be heard on the order to show cause, the court shall, at the hearing on the order to show cause, consider the affidavits and other showings made by the parties appearing and make a determination of the probable validity of the underlying claim alleged against the mortgagor and the mortgagor's defenses. If the court determines that the plaintiff mortgagee is likely to prevail in the foreclosure action, the court shall enter an order requiring the mortgagor to make the payment described in paragraph (e) to the plaintiff mortgagee and provide for a remedy as described in paragraph (f). However, the order shall be stayed pending final adjudication of the claims of the parties if the mortgagor files with the court a written undertaking executed by a surety approved by the court in an amount equal to the unpaid balance of the lien being foreclosed the mortgage on the property, including all principal, interest, unpaid taxes, and insurance premiums paid by the plaintiff the mortgagee.
- (e) If In the event the court enters an order requiring the mortgagor to make payments to the plaintiff mortgagee, payments shall be payable at such intervals and in such amounts provided for in the mortgage instrument before acceleration or maturity. The obligation to make payments pursuant to any order entered under this subsection shall commence from the date of the motion filed under this section hereunder. The order shall be served upon the mortgagor no later than 20 days before the date specified for the first payment. The order may permit, but may

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shall not require, the plaintiff mortgagee to take all appropriate steps to secure the premises during the pendency of the foreclosure action.

- (f) If In the event the court enters an order requiring payments, the order shall also provide that the plaintiff is mortgagee shall be entitled to possession of the premises upon the failure of the mortgagor to make the payment required in the order unless at the hearing on the order to show cause the court finds good cause to order some other method of enforcement of its order.
- (q) All amounts paid pursuant to this section shall be credited against the mortgage obligation in accordance with the terms of the loan documents; , provided, however, that any payments made under this section do shall not constitute a cure of any default or a waiver or any other defense to the mortgage foreclosure action.
- (h) Upon the filing of an affidavit with the clerk that the premises have not been vacated pursuant to the court order, the clerk shall issue to the sheriff a writ for possession which shall be governed by the provisions of s. 83.62.
- (i) For purposes of this subsection, there is a rebuttable presumption that a residential property for which a homestead exemption for taxation was granted according to the certified rolls of the latest assessment by the county property appraiser, before the filing of the foreclosure action, is an owneroccupied residential property.
- (3) The Supreme Court is requested to amend the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure to provide for expedited foreclosure proceedings in conformity with this section and is requested to

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develop and publish forms for use under this section.

Section 6. Section 702.11, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

- 702.11 Expedited foreclosure of abandoned residential real property.-
- (1) As used in this section, the term "abandoned residential real property" means residential real property that is deemed abandoned upon a showing that:
- (a) A duly licensed process server unaffiliated with the owner or servicer of any mortgage on the residential real property or with the attorney or law firm representing such owner or servicer has made at least three attempts to locate an occupant of the residential real property. The attempts must have been made at least 72 hours apart, and at least one each of such attempts must have been made before 12 p.m., between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m., and between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. Each attempt must include physically knocking or ringing at the door of the residential real property and such other efforts as are normally sufficient to obtain a response from an occupant.
 - (b) Two or more of the following conditions exist:
- 1. Windows or entrances to the premises are boarded up or closed off or multiple window panes are broken and unrepaired.
- 2. Doors to the premises are smashed through, broken off, unhinged, or continuously unlocked.
- 3. Rubbish, trash, or debris has accumulated on the mortgaged premises.
- 4. The premises are deteriorating and are below or in imminent danger of falling below minimum community standards for public safety and sanitation.

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- 5. If the premises are a part of a condominium or are governed by a mandatory homeowners' association, the manager or other representative of the association has confirmed that assessments for the unit are at least 90 days delinquent.
- 6. Interviews with at least two neighbors in different households indicate that the residence has been abandoned. The neighbors must be adjoining, across the street in view of the home, or across the hall or adjacent to the unit in a condominium or cooperative.

The sheriff or process server making attempts to locate an occupant of the residential real property and to determine the abandoned status of the residential real property may provide, by affidavit and photographic or other documentation, evidence of the condition of the residential real property, and may charge a reasonable fee for the attempts and for any affidavit or other documentation evidencing the condition of the residential real property.

(2) (a) The party entitled to enforce the note and mortgage encumbering the residential real property appearing to be abandoned may file a petition before the court seeking to determine the status of the residential real property and to invoke an expedited foreclosure proceeding relating to the property. Upon the filing of an affidavit of diligent search and inquiry and the affidavit or documentary evidence set forth in subsection (1), the court shall, upon request of the petitioner, issue one or more subpoenas to the utility companies serving the residential real property commanding disclosure of the status of utility service to the subject property, including whether



utilities are currently turned off and whether all outstanding utility payments have been made and, if so, by whom.

(b) If, after review of the response of the utility companies to the subpoenas and all other matters of record, the court may deem the property to have been abandoned and the plaintiff entitled to expedited foreclosure.

Section 7. The amendments to s. 702.10, Florida Statutes, and the creation of s. 702.11, Florida Statutes, by this act are remedial in nature and shall apply to causes of action pending on the effective date of this act. Section 702.015, Florida Statutes, as created by this act, applies to cases filed on or after July 1, 2012.

Section 8. The Legislature finds that this act is remedial in nature. Accordingly, it is the intent of the Legislature that this act shall apply to all mortgages encumbering real property and all promissory notes secured by a mortgage, whether executed before, on, or after the effective date of this act.

Section 9. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

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======= T I T L E A M E N D M E N T ========= And the title is amended as follows:

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Delete everything before the enacting clause and insert:

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An act relating to mortgage foreclosures; amending s. 95.11, F.S.; reducing the limitations period for

A bill to be entitled

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commencing an action to enforce a claim of a deficiency judgment subsequent to a foreclosure

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action; providing for application to existing causes of action; creating s. 702.015, F.S.; providing legislative intent; specifying required contents of a complaint seeking to foreclose on certain types of residential properties with respect to the authority of the plaintiff to foreclose on the note and the location of the note; providing that failure to file such documents does not affect title to property subsequent to a foreclosure sale; amending s. 702.06, F.S.; limiting the amount of a deficiency judgment; amending s. 702.10, F.S.; expanding the class of persons authorized to move for expedited foreclosure; defining the term "lienholder"; providing requirements and procedures with respect to an order directed to defendants to show cause why a final judgment of foreclosure should not be entered; providing that certain failures by a defendant to make certain filings or to make certain appearances may have specified legal consequences; requiring the court to enter a final judgment of foreclosure and order a foreclosure sale under certain circumstances; revising a restriction on a mortgagee to request a court to order a mortgagor defendant to make payments or to vacate the premises during an action to foreclose on residential real estate to provide that the restriction applies to all but owner-occupied residential property; providing a presumption regarding owner-occupied residential property; requesting the Supreme Court to adopt rules and forms

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for use in expedited foreclosure proceedings; creating s. 702.11, F.S.; establishing expedited foreclosure proceedings for abandoned residential real property and procedures and requirements with respect thereto; providing for application of the act; providing an effective date.