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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Community Housing Survey:

'EASY' CONDOMINIUM AND HOA LIVING IS NOT WITHOUT ITS DRAWBACKS

First of two reports on community-association living.

CHICAGO—Seventy-million Americans may reside in condominiums and homeowners associations (HOAs), but it is not a perfect lifestyle.

One of the biggest attractions of shared-community ownership is the so-called “carefree living” aspect. Often, there are no yards to maintain, grass to cut, snow to shovel, windows to wash, decks to stain or roofs to repair. All an owner has to do is sit back, pay his or her monthly assessment, and enjoy the recreational amenities.

However, the condo lifestyle often isn't always pretty. In 2010, a survey by the Community Association Institute found that more than half of the nation's HOAs were facing “serious financial problems.”

In 2013, Association Reserves, a California company that helps associations with budget and operational issues, noted that 72 percent of association-governed communities were underfunded, up from 59.5 percent a decade ago.

Now, a new national survey by the Coalition for Community Housing Policy in the Public Interest (CHPPI) found that 95 percent of community association residents feel that “lack of transparency” and “poor communication” was at least a moderate problem, while a shocking 84 percent felt that it was a “very serious problem.”

(MORE)

CHPPI's mission is to unite Americans to establish consumer-friendly community housing policy that restores, upholds, and preserves the constitutional and civil rights of all residents living in association-governed communities. And, CHPPI seeks to educate housing consumers about their rights and responsibilities, should they choose to live in an association-governed residential community.

"Our survey, which rated the level of concern on 26 commonly reported issues, found that a broad spectrum—from voting and election procedures to power of the board to fine owners—were viewed as major problems within condo associations and HOAs by respondents," said housing advocate Sara Benson, a CHPPI board member.

"An overwhelming 93 percent of survey respondents felt there is at least a moderate problem within their condo or HOA's power of the board to issue fines," noted housing advocate Deborah Cassano Goonan, a CHPPI board member based in Florida.

More than 300 owners residing in condominium and HOA communities in Florida, California, Nevada, Illinois, Texas and Arizona, and a host of other states responded to the survey.

Half of the respondents were real estate professionals involved in property management, brokerage, construction, land use or real estate law, said Benson, who also is president of Association Evaluation, LLC, a Chicago-based real estate technology firm that rates condo and homeowner associations.

- Fifty percent own single-family detached homes in an HOA, while 34 percent own a condo, townhome or villa in an HOA with no private yard.

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Other findings of the CHPPI survey follow:

- A whopping 96 percent of those who were surveyed said they believe there is at least a moderate problem in their condo or HOA with "apathy and lack of involvement."

- Ninety-three percent of owners said there is at least a moderate problem with their HOA's board "power to fine" homeowners.

- An HOA's "power to foreclose" on an owner's unit was overwhelmingly viewed as a problem by 89 percent of respondents.

- Eighty-eight percent of respondents said there is at least a moderate problem with "unreasonable limitations on residents' rights in HOAs, and 86 percent said there is a moderate problem with "discrimination against owners."

- Seventy-two percent of all respondents said they have been involved in a "significant dispute" with a condo or HOA, one that was difficult to resolve.

- Seventy-two percent said condo and HOA rules and restrictions are not consistently enforced.

- Forty-percent of those who replied to the survey said they have filed a complaint against their condo or HOA with a state agency.

- Thirty percent of the respondents said they have "taken legal action" against their condo or HOA as a plaintiff.

In conclusion, the survey respondents gave the following opinions on the future of community associations:

- Nearly half of all respondents said that HOAs "need to be significantly reformed."

- Twenty-five percent of the respondents feel that HOAs "need to be abolished or phased out of existence."

(MORE)

HOUSING SURVEY: 'EASY' CONDO & HOA LIVING NOT WITHOUT DRAWBACKS—ADD 2

CHPPI firmly believes that every consumer deserves transparent, full disclosure of community governance standards, ongoing documentation of fiscal health, and the right to reside in a safe, healthy, and welcoming community.

For more information on the Coalition for Community Housing Policy in the Public Interest, or for a copy of the CHPPI survey, visit: www.Chppi.org.

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(CHPPI.HOA.SURVEY.2015)