

In re: Meridian Law Group, LLC (d/b/a themlglaw.com and d/b/a themeridianlawgroup.com), and Eric A. Mader, Esquire
Case No.: 11-208

CONSENT ORDER

The State of New Hampshire Banking Department (the "Department") finds and Orders as follows:

Respondents

1. Meridian Law Group, LLC (d/b/a themlglaw.com and d/b/a themeridianlawgroup.com) ("Meridian") is a limited liability company duly formed in the State of South Carolina on September 10, 2010 with an initial principal office location in Columbia, South Carolina. Meridian also registered with the Florida Secretary of State on July 14, 2014 with a principal office location in Tampa, Florida. Meridian has not filed with the New Hampshire Secretary of State.
2. Eric A. Mader, Esquire ("Attorney Mader") is a co-owner of Meridian. Attorney Mader is not a licensed New Hampshire attorney.
3. Meridian and Attorney Mader shall be collectively referred to as "Respondents."

4. In New Hampshire, the above named Respondents have not been previously licensed by the Department as Debt Adjusters.

Jurisdiction

5. The Department is authorized to regulate debt adjusters pursuant to RSA Chapter 399-D. *RSA 399-D:1* and *RSA 399-D:3*.
6. The Commissioner has jurisdiction to issue orders to cease and desist from alleged violations under RSA Chapter 399-D and to deny a license or assess penalties pursuant to RSA Chapter 399-D. *RSA 399-D:13* and *RSA 399-D:23*.
7. The Department may assess administrative fines not to exceed \$2,500.00 for each violation of RSA Chapter 399-D. *RSA 399-D:24,IV and V*.
8. The Department may require Respondents to provide restitution as set out in *RSA 399-D:3,III*.

Facts

9. From at least 2010 to 2011, Respondent Meridian Law Group, LLC contracted with at least 18 New Hampshire consumers to provide debt adjuster services while not properly licensed with the Department. The following six (6) New Hampshire consumers require refunds, which total \$12,213.72, as follows:

Consumer 4: \$1,663.05

Consumer 5: \$2,826.36

Consumer 6: \$1,843.40

Consumer 8: \$2,432.24

Consumer 13: \$600.62

Consumer 18: \$2,848.05

10. During the request for information, Respondents fully cooperated with the Department and provided the information to show that Respondents did conduct business in New Hampshire without proper licensure.

Violation(s) of Law and Penalties

11. Respondents have conducted unlicensed debt adjuster activity for New Hampshire consumers without a valid Debt Adjuster license, in violation of RSA 399-D:3,I.

Respondents' Consent and Acknowledgments

12. Respondents hereby acknowledge that were an administrative hearing to be held in this matter, the Department would introduce evidence demonstrating that Respondents violated RSA Chapter 399-D.
13. Respondents have voluntarily entered into this Consent Order without reliance upon any discussions between the Department and Respondents, without promise of a benefit of any kind (other than concessions contained in this Consent Order), and without threats, force,

intimidation, or coercion of any kind. Respondents further acknowledge their understanding of the nature of the allegations set forth in this action, including the potential penalties provided by law. Respondents voluntarily enter into this Consent Order to avoid prolonged litigation and to resolve the matter amicably without admission of wrongdoing or violation.

14. Respondents hereby acknowledge, understand, and agree that they have the right to notice and hearing and hereby waive said rights. Respondents hereby further acknowledge they waive the filing of any civil actions related to this matter.

Order

15. **Whereas pursuant to RSA 399-D:25,VI,** this Consent Order is necessary, appropriate and in the public interest and consistent with the intent and purposes of New Hampshire banking laws, the Department Orders as follows:

- a. Pursuant to RSA 399-D:23,I and II, Respondents shall cease and desist from conducting unlicensed debt adjuster activity and from violating RSA Chapter 399-D; and
- b. Respondents shall reimburse the 6 New Hampshire Consumers the fees charged as described in

Paragraph 9 above, which shall be payable contemporaneously with Respondents' execution of this Consent Order. All checks shall be bank checks or guaranteed funds and made payable to each individual consumer and submitted directly to each consumer via first class mail by FHSI as follows:

(1). Each check shall be accompanied by written correspondence containing only the following language: "This refund check is being sent to you pursuant to a public consent order that Meridian Law Group, LLC, et al. entered into with the New Hampshire Banking Department. You may find a copy of the public consent order on the Banking Department's website, which is located at www.nh.gov/banking/orders/enforcement/index.htm by searching for Docket #11-208. For further questions, please contact the New Hampshire Banking Department at (603) 271-3561;"

(2). Any verbal communications with consumers about the restitution shall be limited to the language found in the written correspondence,

and Respondents shall refer the consumer to the Department for further information;

(3). Respondents shall also forward to the Department copies of both cancelled checks or copies of both cancelled check images;

(4). Respondents shall make a second attempt to locate the consumer, if the address to which the restitution check is mailed is no longer valid. Such attempt shall be documented and reported to the Department;

(5). Respondents shall follow up at least once with any consumer who does not cash each check within three months of receipt. Such follow up shall be documented and reported to the Department; and

(6). If, after six months, a consumer has failed to cash or deposit the restitution check(s), Respondents shall begin the process to escheat the funds to the New Hampshire State Treasurer's Abandoned Property division. Such process shall be documented and reported to the Department. The process of escheatment may begin prior to six months, if so approved or directed by the Department; and

c. Respondents shall pay to the Department \$13,500.00 in administrative fines as follows. All checks shall be bank checks or guaranteed funds and made payable to "State of New Hampshire":

- An initial payment of \$6,750.00, payable contemporaneously with Respondents' execution of this Consent Order; and
- \$6,750.00 on the 1st of November 2014.

16. The Consent Order finally and completely concludes this matter against Respondents. This Consent Order may still be revoked and the Department may pursue any and all remedies available under law, if the Department later finds that Respondents knowingly or willfully withheld information used and relied upon in this Consent Order.
17. This Consent Order is binding on all heirs, assigns, and/or successors in interest.
18. This Consent Order shall become effective upon the date the Commissioner signs this Consent Order, providing the Department has confirmed the payments referenced in Paragraphs 15.b. and 15.c. herein.
19. Once this Consent Order is effective, the Department agrees not to seek further reimbursement, refunds,

penalties, fines, costs, or fees regarding the facts, allegations, or findings of violations contained herein.

WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing, we have set our hands to this Consent Order, effective upon its execution by Glenn A. Perlow, Bank Commissioner.

Recommended this 22nd day of October, 2014 by

/s/
Maryam Torben Desfosses,
Hearings Examiner, Banking Department

Executed this 16th day of October, 2014 by

/s/
Eric A. Mader, Esquire, on his own behalf and as co-owner of Meridian Law Group, LLC (d/b/a themlglaw.com and d/b/a themeridianlawgroup.com)

SO ORDERED.

/s/

Dated: 10/22/14

Glenn A. Perlow,
Bank Commissioner