1 2	David C. Shonka Acting General Counsel	
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	Laura M. Sullivan Leah Frazier James Chen Isullivan@ftc.gov; lfrazier@ftc.gov; jche Federal Trade Commission 600 Pennsylvania Avenue Mail Drop NJ 3158 Washington, DC 20580 Tel: (202) 326-3327 (Sullivan); (-2187) Fax: (202) 326-3768 John D. Jacobs (Local Counsel) jiacobs@ftc.gov California Bar No. 134154 Federal Trade Commission 10877 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 700 Los Angeles, CA 90024 Tel: (310) 824-4343 Fax: (310) 824-4380 jjacobs@ftc.gov	
13	Attorneys for Plaintiff FTC	
14 15 16		DISTRICT COURT CT OF CALIFORNIA
17	Federal Trade Commission,	}
18	Plaintiff,	
19	v.	
20 21 22 23 24	Federal Loan Modification Law Center, LLP and Anz & Associates, PLC and	
24 25 26 27 28	Venture Legal Support, PLC and LegalTurn, Inc., a.k.a. Legal Turn, Inc. and Federal Loan Modification, LLC	Case No. SACV09-401 CJC (MLGx)

1	and
2	Federal Loan Modifications
3	and
4	SBSC Corporation, also doing business as Federal Loan Modification
5	and
6	Nabile "Bill" Anz
7	and
8	Boaz Minitzer
9	and
10	Jeffrey Broughton
11	and
12	Steven Oscherowitz
13	Defendants,
14	and
15	Legal Turn. LLC
16	and
17	MGO Capital
18	Relief Defendants.
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FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE AND OTHER EQUITABLE RELIEF

Plaintiff, the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), for its first amended complaint alleges:

1. The FTC brings this action under Section 13(b) of the Federal Trade Commission Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), to obtain temporary, preliminary, and permanent injunctive relief, rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, disgorgement of ill-gotten monies, and other equitable relief for

Defendants' acts or practices in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337(a), and 1345, and 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 53(b).

Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and (c), and 3. 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).

PLAINTIFF

4. Plaintiff FTC is an independent agency of the United States 9 Government created by statute. 15 U.S.C. § 41 et seq. The FTC is charged, inter 10 alia, with enforcement of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), which 11 prohibits unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce. The FTC 12 is authorized to initiate federal district court proceedings, by its own attorneys, to 13 enjoin violations of the FTC Act and to secure such equitable relief as may be 14 appropriate in each case, including restitution and disgorgement. 15 U.S.C. 15 § 53(b). 16

DEFENDANTS

5. Federal Loan Modification Law Center, LLP ("FLM Law Center"), 19 formerly known as Anz & Hilmoe, LLP and presently doing business as FLM Law 20 Center, Federal Loan Modification, and Federal Loan Modification Law Center, is a California limited liability partnership with its principal place of business at 9460 22 Balboa Boulevard, Northridge, CA 90048. At all times material to this Complaint, 23 FLM Law Center, acting alone or in concert with others, has advertised, marketed, 24 and/or sold purported mortgage loan modification services to consumers 25 throughout the United States. FLM Law Center transacts or has transacted 26 business in the Central District of California. 27

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Anz & Associates, PLC ("Anz & Associates"), is a California

professional law corporation with its principal place of business at 9460 Balboa
 Boulevard, Northridge, CA 91325. At all times material to this Complaint, Anz &
 Associates, acting alone or in concert with others, has advertised, marketed, and/or
 sold purported mortgage loan modification services to consumers throughout the
 United States. Anz & Associates transacts or has transacted business in the Central
 District of California.

7 7. Venture Legal Support, PLC is a California professional law
8 corporation with its principal place of business at 9460 Balboa Boulevard,
9 Northridge, CA 91325. At all times material to this Complaint, Venture Legal
10 Support, acting alone or in concert with others, has advertised, marketed, and/or
11 sold purported mortgage loan modification services to consumers throughout the
12 United States. Venture Legal Support transacts or has transacted business in the
13 Central District of California.

8. LegalTurn, Inc., also known as Legal Turn, Inc., is a California
corporation with its principal place of business at 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite
200, Los Angeles, CA 90048. LegalTurn, Inc., which purports to be a legal
referral network, at all times material to this Complaint, has received credit card
payments from and has paid refunds to customers who have purchased purported
mortgage loan modification services from Defendants. LegalTurn, Inc. transacts or
has transacted business in the Central District of California.

9. Federal Loan Modification, LLC ("Federal Loan Modification") is a
 California limited liability company with its principal place of business at 6420
 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90048. At all times material to
 this Complaint, Federal Loan Modification, acting alone or in concert with others,
 has advertised, marketed, and/or sold purported loan modification services.
 Federal Loan Modification transacts or has transacted business in the Central
 District of California.

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10. Federal Loan Modifications is a California corporation with its

principal place of business at 5455 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700, Los Angeles,
 CA 90028. At all times material to this Complaint, Federal Loan Modifications,
 acting alone or in concert with others, has advertised, marketed, and/or sold
 purported loan modification services. Federal Loan Modifications transacts or has
 transacted business in the Central District of California.

11. SBSC Corporation, also doing business as Federal Loan Modification,
is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 6420 Wilshire
Boulevard, Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90048. At all times material to this
Complaint, SBSC Corporation, acting alone or in concert with others, has
advertised, marketed, and/or sold purported loan modification services. SBSC
Corporation transacts or has transacted business in the Central District of
California.

12. Nabile "Bill"Anz, an attorney licensed in California, is a partner of
Anz & Associates and FLM Law Center and a manager of Legal Turn. LLC. At all
times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has
formulated, directed, controlled, or participated in the acts and practices of
Defendants, including the acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Anz
resides and transacts or has transacted business in the Central District of California.

19 13. Boaz Minitzer is the President and an owner of LegalTurn, Inc., the
20 owner of Federal Loan Modification, and the President of Federal Loan
21 Modifications and SBSC Corporation. At all times material to this Complaint,
22 acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, or
23 participated in the acts and practices of Defendants, including the acts and
24 practices set forth in this Complaint. Minitzer resides or transacts or has transacted
25 business in the Central District of California.

14. Jeffrey Broughton is the President and Chief Executive Officer of
FLM Law Center and an officer of LegalTurn, Inc. At all times material to this
Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed,

controlled, or participated in the acts and practices of Defendants, including the
 acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Broughton resides and transacts or
 has transacted business in the Central District of California.

15. Steven Oscherowitz is a director and owner of LegalTurn, Inc. and an
executive of FLM Law Center. At all times material to this Complaint, acting
alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, or
participated in the acts and practices of Defendants, including the acts and
practices set forth in this Complaint. Oscherowitz resides and transacts or has
transacted business in the Central District of California.

16. Relief Defendant Legal Turn. LLC is a California limited liability
company with its principal place of business at 7083 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite
180, Los Angeles, California 90028. Legal Turn. LLC has received funds and
other property that were derived unlawfully from payments by consumers as a
consequence of the acts and practices complained of herein, and does not have a
legitimate claim to those funds. Legal Turn. LLC transacts or has transacted
business in the Central District of California.

17 17. Relief Defendant MGO Capital is a California corporation with its
principal place of business at 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200, Los Angeles,
CA 90048. MGO Capital has received funds and other property that were derived
unlawfully from payments by consumers as a consequence of the acts and practices
complained of herein, and does not have a legitimate claim to those funds. MGO
Capital transacts or has transacted business in the Central District of California.

18. Corporate Defendants identified in paragraphs 5 through 11 have
operated as a common enterprise while engaging in the deceptive acts and practices
alleged below. Corporate Defendants share or have shared office space and
employees, are commonly controlled, commingle or have commingled funds, and
have participated in a common scheme to deceive consumers. Because Corporate
Defendants have operated as a common enterprise, each of them is jointly and

severally liable for the acts and practices alleged below.

COMMERCE

19. At all times relevant to this complaint, Defendants have maintained a substantial course of trade in or affecting commerce, as "commerce" is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO ASSIST HOMEOWNERS

20. In the response to the nation's mortgage crisis, the federal government has introduced and widely publicized a number of federal mortgage loan modification programs aimed at assisting distressed homeowners to modify or refinance mortgage loans that have become unaffordable.

13 21. In the past year, two U.S. Presidents, the Department of the Treasury,
14 the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the
15 Currency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"),
16 among other federal authorities, have announced these federal mortgage loan
17 modification programs.

22. Additionally, HUD has designated thousands of HUD-approved nonprofit housing counseling agencies, which it has recommended publicly to
consumers who are at risk of foreclosure or falling behind on their mortgage
payments. These HUD-approved housing counselors provide services at no cost to
homeowners, negotiating with lenders to make homeowners' mortgage loans more
affordable.

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DEFENDANTS' BUSINESS PRACTICES

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25 23. Since at least May 2008, Defendants have engaged in a course of
26 conduct to advertise, market, offer to sell, and sell to consumers purported
27 mortgage loan modification and foreclosure relief services. Defendants market
28 their services under the name "Federal Loan Modification," although Defendants'

business is not affiliated with or endorsed by the federal government. Defendants
 market their services to homeowners who are in financial distress, delinquent on
 their mortgage loans, or in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure. Defendants
 have charged consumers between \$1,000 and \$3,000 in up-front fees for their so called Federal Loan Modification program.

24. Defendants have conducted an extensive national advertising campaign through television, radio, and the Internet to promote their Federal Loan Modification program. Defendants' advertisements have appeared on national television and cable networks, including but not limited to ABC, CNBC, BET, ESPN, ESPN2, and CNN, and have aired on dozens of radio stations nationwide. These advertisements direct homeowners who are struggling to pay their mortgages to call one of Defendants' toll-free telephone numbers or to visit Defendants' website at www.fedmod.com.

Several of Defendants' radio advertisements prominently feature the
word "federal" and contain other statements to induce consumers to purchase loan
modification and foreclosure relief services from Defendants. *See, e.g.* Exhibits 1,
and 3. The statements made in these advertisements include:

a. Please stay tuned for this important public announcement for those in danger of losing their home. Federal Loan Modification has a program for those that have fallen behind on their mortgage and are facing foreclosure. To find out if you're eligible for the program in your area, call this toll-free number now, 1-800-400-1268. You may be in danger of being evicted. If you can no longer afford your mortgage, find out if you are eligible for the Federal Loan Modification Law Program in your area.

b. Don't lose your home. Get the help you need to save it right now with the Federal Loan Modification Program. If you're like the millions of Americans out there who are struggling to pay a mortgage, you may be eligible for the Federal Loan Modification Program. Call Federal Loan Modification at 1-800-500-9975.

[Exhibit 2]

c. If you are losing your home, you're not alone. In fact, everyone knows that home foreclosures are rising. But there's only one that matters and that's your home. Now you can save your home and your family. But you need to call and ask about the Federal Loan Modification Program. Because not calling will only result in eviction. Don't lose your home. Call Federal Loan Modification at 1-800-600-3884.

[Exhibit 3]

26. Months after Defendants began airing radio advertisements generally, Defendants have inserted, in the beginning of some of their radio advertisements, a disclaimer that states:

Not a government program or agency, Legal services by Bill Anz, Irvine, California through Federal Loan Modification Law Center.

The disclaimer, however, occurs at a speed several times faster and at a lower volume than the body of the advertisement. *See, e.g.* Exhibit 1. Defendants play the disclaimer at the beginning of the advertisement, delivered at a cadence and speed that is faster and more difficult to comprehend than the body of the advertisement, and before any information has been provided about the marketed

1 product.

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27. Defendants also have marketed their services through the website www.fedmod.com, which has both a Spanish-language and English-language version. The website www.fedmod.com urges consumers to call the toll-free number 877-39-HOUSE for a "free" "no obligation" consultation. The website www.fedmod.com also requests that consumers complete a short form and submit the completed form to Defendants, after which a representative will contact the consumer.

28. Rotating statements appear at the top of the homepage for the website www.fedmod.com, including the following statement that appears in large, all-capital print:

ARE YOU CONSIDERING WALKING OUT OF YOUR HOUSE BECAUSE YOU OWE MORE THAN IT IS WORTH? FLM CAN HELP YOU RIGHT NOW! Click HERE to get started!

29. Throughout, the website www.fedmod.com also contains various other statements to induce consumers to purchase Defendants' mortgage loan modification and foreclosure relief services, including:

 At Federal Loan Modification Law Center we have some of the most experienced Personnel in the industry whose sole purpose is to save your home.

b. Can I do this myself? Why should I pay someone else to do it for me? . . . Our negotiators have more experience in mortgage retention than most any of these representatives. *do you?* ... Much like in any important matter, having the proper guidance and representation can make all the difference in the world and can save you time, trouble, money and ultimately your home.

30. The website www.fedmod.com has also contained a hyperlink to a web log (commonly known as a "blog") at www.keepmyhouse.com. The www.keepmyhouse.com blog, authored by Ralph R. Roberts, purports to be a "source of loan modification news, information, commentary, and community." Among other things, the www.keepmyhouse.com blog states that Mr. Roberts is an "an Award-Winning Author and REALTOR," a "Real estate-focused Consumer Advocate," and a "spokesperson for Federal Loan Modification Law Center, LLP." The blog www.keepmyhouse.com contains the following statement about Defendants' services:

KeepMyHouse.com wouldn't be possible without the support of the good folks at Federal Loan Modification Law Center, LLP. . . . Federal Loan Modification Law Center (www.fedmod.com) preserves the American Dream of Homeownership by successfully renegotiating loan agreements between homeowners and lenders. The company's team of experienced real estate attorneys and housing experts understands the fundamentals of the mortgage business, and has spared no expense or time in researching and presenting the best options available for homeowners facing foreclosure or having trouble making their monthly mortgage payments. Check them out at www.FedMod.com.

31. The blog www.keepymyhouse.com also has displayed banner advertisements for Defendants' services, including those that contain the following

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statements:

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a. Federal Loan Modification Law Center Keeps You In Your House.

 b. Are you facing foreclosure? CALL 1-800-285-0380 Federal Loan Modification Law Center. STOP YOUR FORECLOSURE. WE NEGOTIATE WITH YOUR LENDERS FAST!

32. Consumers speak to Defendants' telemarketers when they call the tollfree numbers provided in Defendants' Internet, radio, or television advertising, or
when Defendants call consumers after receiving consumers' information via the
online form.

33. During the telemarketing sales calls, Defendants' representatives
collect information from consumers, including details about the consumers'
mortgages and income. After consumers provide this information, the
telemarketers often tell consumers they are prime candidates for a loan
modification.

34. Defendants' telemarketers typically promise consumers that
Defendants will help modify consumers' mortgage loans to make their payments
more affordable, and in numerous cases, telemarketers claim that they can prevent
foreclosure.

35. In numerous instances, Defendants' telemarketers tell consumers that
Defendants have a success rate in the high ninetieth percentile, and that
Defendants' success rate is so high because they only accept consumers into the
program who are virtually guaranteed to obtain modifications.

36. In numerous instances, Defendants' telemarketers represent that
Defendants will obtain a loan modification for consumers within a specified period
of time, typically no more than a couple of months.

37. Defendants' telemarketers instruct consumers that they must pay at
 least a half of Defendants' fee up-front. The amount of the fee has ranged between
 approximately \$1,500 and \$3,000, with either half or a majority of the fee due up front and the remainder due at a later time.

38. In numerous instances, Defendants' telemarketers tell consumers that
if they are not satisfied with Defendants' service they are entitled to a full refund of
the fees paid.

39. In numerous instances, after consumers have paid Defendants's fee,
Defendants fail to answer or return consumers' telephone calls or provide updates
about the status of Defendants' purported communications with the consumers'
lenders. In other instances, Defendants misrepresent to consumers that
negotiations are proceeding smoothly. In other instances, Defendants misrepresent
that lenders are the cause for delay when, in reality, Defendants have made little if
any effort to contact the lender.

40. In numerous instances, Defendants have encouraged consumers to
stop paying their mortgages, telling consumers that delinquency will demonstrate
the consumer's hardship to the lender and make it easier to obtain a loan
modification. In numerous other instances, Defendants have advised consumers
not to contact their lenders.

41. In numerous instances, Defendants fail to obtain mortgage loan
modifications. In numerous instances, consumers learn from their lenders that
Defendants have not even contacted the lender or that Defendants have had only
minimal, non-substantive contacts with the lender. Some consumers who have
paid for Defendants' services have been able to obtain mortgage loan
modifications and avoid foreclosure only through their own efforts and not because
of any service provided by Defendants.

42. In numerous instances, consumers who did not obtain modifications
have encountered difficulty in obtaining promised refunds and have received

refunds only after making repeated requests or complaining to entities such as the
 Better Business Bureau.

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VIOLATIONS OF SECTION 5 OF THE FTC ACT

43. Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts and practices in or affecting commerce."

44. Misrepresentations or deceptive omissions of material fact constitute deceptive acts or practices prohibited by Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.

<u>Count I</u>

9 45. In numerous instances, Defendants have represented to consumers,
10 expressly or by implication, that Defendants will obtain a mortgage loan
11 modification or stop foreclosure in all or virtually all instances.

46. In truth and in fact, Defendants do not obtain a mortgage loan
modification or stop foreclosure in all or virtually all instances.

47. Therefore, Defendants' representation as set forth in Paragraph 45 is
false and misleading and constitutes a deceptive act or practice in violation of
Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S. C. § 45(a).

Count II

48. Through the means described in Paragraphs 19 and 20, Defendants
have represented to consumers, expressly or by implication, that Defendants are
part of, affiliated with, or endorsed by the United States government or one or
more federal government programs.

49. In truth and fact, Defendants are not part of, affiliated with, or
endorsed by the United States government or one or more federal government
programs.

50. Therefore, Defendants' representation as set forth in Paragraph 48 is
false and misleading and constitutes a deceptive act or practice in violation of
Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

CONSUMER INJURY

51. Consumers have suffered and will continue to suffer substantial injury as a result of Defendants' violations of the FTC Act. In addition, Defendants have been unjustly enriched as a result of their unlawful acts or practices. Absent injunctive relief by this Court, Defendants are likely to continue to injure consumers, reap unjust enrichment, and harm the public interest.

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THIS COURT'S POWER TO GRANT RELIEF

52. Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), empowers this Court to grant injunctive and such other relief as the Court may deem appropriate to halt and redress violations of the FTC Act. The Court, in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, may award ancillary relief, including rescission of contracts and restitution, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies, to prevent and remedy any violation of any provision of law enforced by the FTC.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiff FTC, pursuant to Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), and the Court's own equitable powers, requests that the Court:

A. Award Plaintiff such preliminary injunctive and ancillary relief as
may be necessary to avert the likelihood of consumer injury during the pendency
of this action, and to preserve the possibility of effective final relief, including but
not limited to temporary and preliminary injunctions;

B. Enter a permanent injunction to prevent future violations of the FTC
Act by Defendants;

C. Award such relief as the Court finds necessary to redress injury to
consumers resulting from Defendants' violations of the FTC Act, including but not
limited to rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies
paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies;

D. Award such relief against Relief Defendants Legal
Turn. LLC and MGO Capital that the Court deems necessary to protect and return
funds and other property to which Legal Turn. LLC and MGO Capital have no

legitimate claim that were derived from Defendants' violations of Section 5(a) of
 the FTC Act, including an order to disgorge all ill-gotten gains or proceeds that
 they have received as a result of the acts and practices complained of herein, and
 an order imposing a constructive trust upon such gains or proceeds; and

E. Award Plaintiff the costs of bringing this action, as well as such other and additional relief as the Court may determine to be just and proper.

Dated: June 23, 2009

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Respectfully submitted,

David C. Shonka Acting General Counsel

Laura M. Sullivan Leah Frazier James Chen Isullivan@ftc.gov; lfrazier@ftc.gov; jchen2@ftc.gov Federal Trade Commission 600 Pennsylvania Avenue Mail Drop NJ 3676 Washington, DC 20580 Tel: (202)-326-3327 (Sullivan) (-2187) Frazier;(-2659) Chen Fax: (202)-326-3768

John D. Jacobs (Local Counsel) jiacobs@ftc.gov California Bar No. 134154 Federal Trade Commission 10877 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 700 Los Angeles, CA 90024 Tel: (310) 824-4343 Fax: (310) 824-4380 jjacobs@ftc.gov

Attorneys for Plaintiff FTC