

**December 6, 2011**

**Malecki Law Announces Filing of a Civil Complaint with FINRA Against MetLife Securities, Inc. in Connection with Alleged Ponzi Schemer Robert H. Van Zandt**

Malecki Law announces the filing of a civil arbitration complaint in excess of \$4 million, plus punitive damages, against MetLife Securities, Inc. The case is being filed with the [Financial Industry Regulatory Authority](#) (“FINRA”) today for alleged improper supervision and selling away, relating to an alleged Ponzi scheme that devastated a Bronx community. The complaint alleges that the firm failed to properly supervise and maintain the compliance of one of their registered representatives, [Mr. Robert H. Van Zandt](#), in violation of federal and state securities laws, as well as financial industry rules and regulations. Robert H. Van Zandt is already under investigation by the [New York State Attorney General’s Office](#). “I believe there are a lot of victims out there who don’t know what is going on, nor their rights under the rules and regulations of the securities industry,” securities fraud attorney Jenice Malecki indicates.

In November of this year FINRA and the [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission](#) jointly released Regulatory Notice 11-54 stressing the importance of supervision over registered representatives. Shortly before the release of [Regulatory Notice 11-54](#), FINRA filed a [regulatory action](#) against Merrill Lynch and fined the firm \$1 million for failing to properly supervise a registered representative and catch a Ponzi scheme that he was running out of a San Antonio, Texas branch office that victimized clients and non-clients of Merrill Lynch, all to which Merrill Lynch was responsible for its failure to supervise.

The complaint filed by Malecki Law relates to the alleged conduct of Robert H. Van Zandt of the Van Zandt Agency, who is believed to have sold unregistered securities in the form of promissory notes that were represented to prospective investors as part of a secured real estate investment, which appears improperly set up and not secured at all. It is alleged that these notes were part of yet another “Ponzi” scheme in what Ms. Malecki opines to be “an era filled with ponzi schemes for which the industry should closely monitor to avoid harm to unwitting victims,” this alleged ponzi scheme run through a series of shell companies including Burke and Grace Avenue Corp.

According to his FINRA Broker Check Report, Robert H. Van Zandt was a registered representative with MetLife Securities, Inc. from December of 2004 through February of 2007. During that time, it is alleged that despite its duties to properly supervise Mr. Van Zandt, MetLife Securities allowed him and others to sell unregistered securities in connection with the operation of this Ponzi scheme for the entirety of his tenure with the firm.

It is alleged that Mr. Van Zandt used his status in the close-knit Bronx community to earn the trust of his clients, and ultimately, solicited hundreds of investors, defrauding them of over \$20 million. According to the complaint filed with FINRA, Investors were solicited

to invest in the scheme while they were having their tax returns done at the Van Zandt Agency and were lured into verbally and through prominently placed brochures promising essentially “guaranteed” returns of 9-12% annually, without appropriate registration, disclaimers, or any earmarks of supervision over this conduct. It is believed that these investors, many of whom invested their IRA’s, proceeds from inheritances, and life savings, have lost substantially all, if not all, of their investment.

Investors or employees with knowledge of the events at the Van Zandt Agency who seek further information or want to explore their rights should contact Malecki Law by e-mail or phone. Malecki Law has a uniquely diverse background with significant experience representing clients in securities and investment fraud issues and is "AV Rated" by Martindale-Hubbell. Malecki Law hosts a website providing information and resources dedicated to the securities industry: [www.AboutSecuritiesLaw.com](http://www.AboutSecuritiesLaw.com). Please contact Jenice L. Malecki, Esq., **MALECKI LAW**, 11 Broadway, Suite 715, New York, NY 10004, Telephone: (212) 943-1233, Facsimile: (212) 943-1238, E-Mail: [Jenice@MaleckiLaw.com](mailto:Jenice@MaleckiLaw.com).