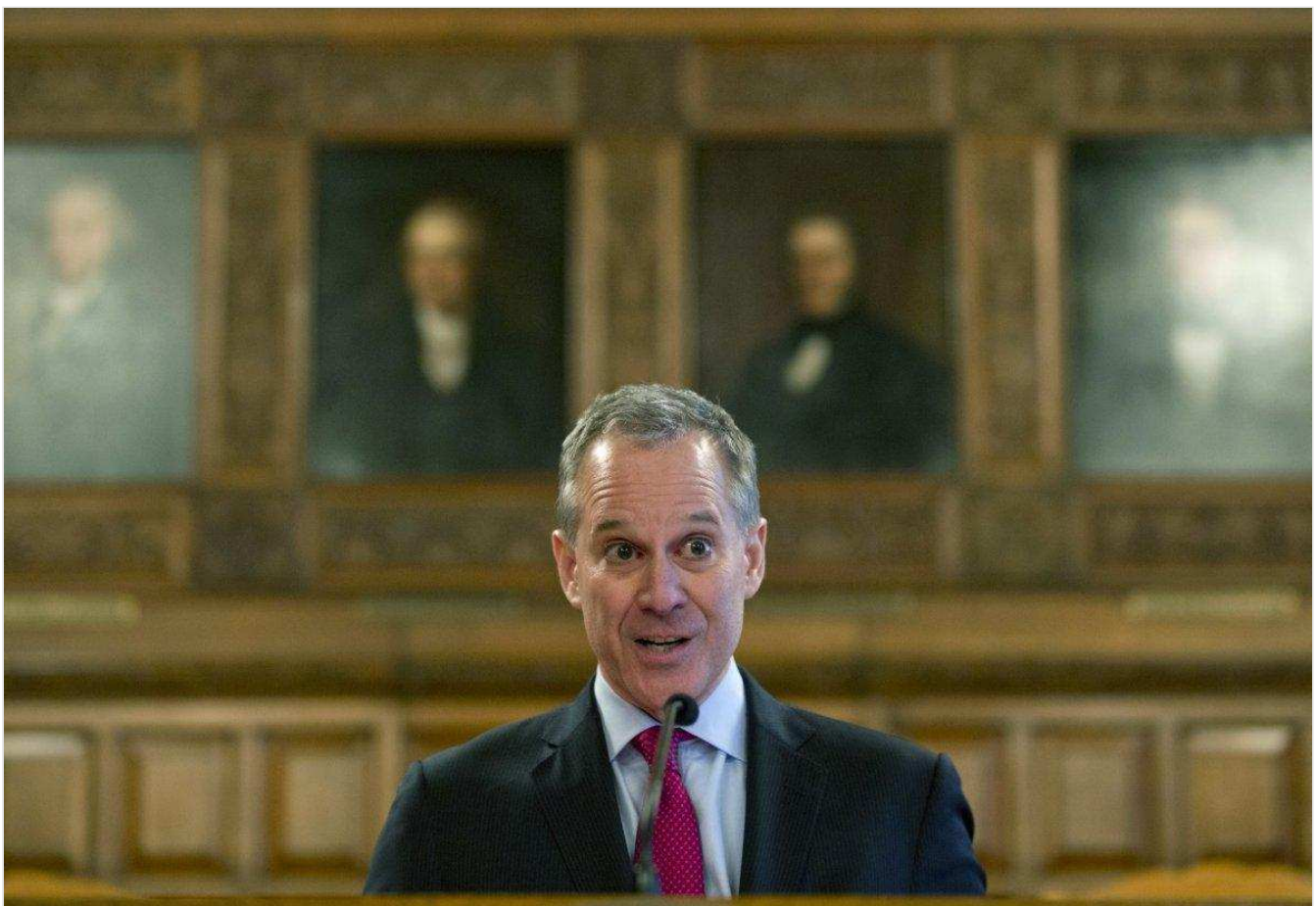


# New York AG assembling teams to investigate housing abuses

BY GLENN BLAIN

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New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman on Thursday is expected to announce the creation of new teams of investigators to handle cases of housing-related abuses. (MIKE GROLL/AP)

ALBANY — State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is beefing up his office's efforts to crack down on abusive landlords and mortgage lenders.

Schneiderman on Thursday is expected to announce the creation of new teams of investigators to handle cases of tenant harassment, deceptive lending practices and other housing-related abuses.

"The new measures ... will ensure that we are using every legal tool at our disposal to best protect tenants and homeowners against abuse," Schneiderman said.

Under Schneiderman's plan, the attorney general's existing Real Estate Finance Bureau, which currently polices real estate transactions, will be tasked to investigate cases of tenant harassment and other civil housing frauds.

The newly reconstituted bureau will be led by Brent Meltzer, who is leaving his job as assistant commissioner at the city's Department of Housing and Preservation Development.

Additionally, Schneiderman is creating a new Real Estate Enforcement Unit to investigate criminal complaints such as bank fraud, deceptive lending practices, and deed theft.

"By investigating fraud, deceptive lending practices, and tenant harassment, our office intends to curb this corrosive behavior and all who enable it," said Special Counsel John Spagna, who will head the enforcement unit.

Schneiderman's new teams are in addition to the Cuomo administration's Tenant Protection Unit, which also investigates cases of tenant harassment.

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