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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 4, 2009
Re: Varougan "Vincent" Gharemanian
2 Years State Prison for Grand Theft
From an Elder, Fraudulent Use of a
Contractor's License, and Contracting
Without a License

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Varougan "Vincent" Gharemanian, age 55, of Glendale, California, was convicted of Grand Theft from an Elder, Fraudulent Use of a Contractor's License and Contracting Without a License. Deputy District Attorney John Goulart prosecuted the case for the People.

Gharemanian, posing as a licensed contractor, entered into three home remodeling contracts. Two of the homes were in Turlock and one was in Modesto. Two of the victims were over 65 years of age. After doing some sub-standard work on each project, he abandoned each project, leaving each homeowner with an incomplete kitchen and/or bathroom. In each instance he also charged and received an excessive down payment. Under the law, a contractor is only permitted to charge a down payment of \$1,000 or 10% of the contract amount, whichever is less. He escorted one of his elderly victims to her bank to obtain his payment in cash; the victim withdrew \$11,700 in \$100 bills and paid them to Gharemanian. Each of the victims filed formal complaints with the California Contractors State License Board (CSLB).

Upon entry of the guilty plea, the Honorable Ricardo Cordova sentenced Gharemanian to 2 years in state prison and ordered him to pay restitution to all of the victims.

*Consumers need to be aware of the \$1,000/10% down payment rule, that any construction jobs which cost \$500 or more in labor and materials require a **licensed** contractor, and that they should contact the CSLB by phone (1-800-321-CSLB) or online (www.cslb.ca.gov) to check the license status of the contractor they are considering hiring.*

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