

AMERICANS FOR FAIRNESS IN LENDING

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AMERICANS FOR FAIRNESS IN LENDING TO WIND DOWN

In the wake of heightened awareness of predatory lending and recent major financial reforms including the creation of a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Americans for Fairness in Lending (AFFIL) will be winding down its operations at the end of September.

“We have been fighting for greater public awareness of predatory lending and the need for stronger consumer protection laws and regulations for many years,” said Sarah Byrnes, AFFIL’s Director. “When we began, we never dreamed we would actually see the creation of a federal regulator wholly devoted to consumer finance. It’s a realization of our goals far beyond what we expected.”

AFFIL’s staff and Board are clear that much work remains to be done, particularly as the new financial protection agency begins to write regulations next year. Coalitions of organizations will continue to fight these battles. Many of these groups first began working together as AFFIL’s “Partners.”

“When we began forming AFFIL, the nation was almost completely unaware of the magnitude and toll of predatory lending and the impending foreclosure crisis,” said Cathy Lesser Mansfield, AFFIL’s Board Chair and a consumer law professor at Drake Law School. “Our initial goal was to raise awareness of predatory lending. As the world shifted and predatory lending became more widely known, we worked to create support for government protection from predatory lending by bringing together individuals and organizations.”

AFFIL’s first public awareness campaign in 2007 included a print ad campaign, website, and collaboration with the documentary *Maxed Out*. Its public launch featured two pre-release screenings of this film in New York City and Washington, DC.

AFFIL focused on a variety of lending issues, including credit cards, mortgages, student loans, payday lending, car financing, refund anticipation loans, overdraft loans, car title lending, credit reporting and scoring, debt collection, and the Community Reinvestment Act.

The organization focused particularly on reforming credit cards, especially to protect young college-age consumers, and played a key role in the passage of the Credit CARD Act of 2009.

In late 2009, the organization entered into a close partnership with Americans for Financial Reform (AFR), a Washington-based coalition of over 250 groups which successfully pushed for broad overhaul of the nation’s financial system through the passage of this summer’s Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. AFFIL staff played a key role working with AFR staff during this historic effort.

“AFFIL is leaving an impressive legacy for the consumer movement,” said Will Ogburn, Secretary of the AFFIL Board and Executive Director of the National Consumer Law Center, an AFFIL Partner. “From the many consumers who were educated and took action on their website, to their successful work on the Credit CARD Act of 2009, to their contributions to Americans for Financial Reform over the past year – these are just a few of the ways AFFIL has helped consumers over the years.”

For more information about AFFIL’s accomplishments, [click here](#) (PDF link).

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