



May 18, 2016

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge you to oppose any funding bills that include provisions rolling back or undermining financial reform. At the end of last year Congress wisely rejected multiple efforts to use the budget process to force through unrelated ideological riders, including changes in financial regulation that would undermine consumer protections, endanger financial security, or reduce accountability for big banks. It is vitally important that members remain committed to opposing such riders again this year.

Wall Street-driven financial deregulation and out-of-control compensation that incentivized excessive, short-term risk-taking led to the economic meltdown of 2008. Taxpayers picked up the tab for Wall Street's recovery, but everyday Americans are still struggling with the devastating effects of the crisis. The good news is that since 2008, reforms have been put in place that have begun to protect consumers and reduce the risk of another catastrophe. Among the shining examples of that reform has been the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). CFPB enforcement activity has secured more than \$11 billion in relief for more than 25 million consumers and their rulemaking and supervision are making markets safer and fairer for hundreds of millions more.

Other reforms included in the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank) have begun to reduce the systemic risks that led to the last crisis. These reforms restrict irresponsible and excessive borrowing and risk-taking by financial institutions, and are particularly targeted at the largest Wall Street banks and financial institutions.

New advances are also being made in protecting the retirement savings of American families. The Department of Labor (DOL) has finalized a conflict-of-interest rule that will protect workers against misleading advice designed to steer them into investments that benefit the broker instead of the client. The White House Council of Economic Advisers estimates that conflicted retirement advice costs ordinary savers \$17 billion annually.¹

In spite of the importance of these reforms, and their broad popularity,² some members of Congress are likely to once again attempt to use the appropriations process to roll them back,

¹ Council of Economic Advisors, *The Effects of Conflicted Investment Advice on Retirement Savings*, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (Feb. 2015),

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cea_coi_report_final.pdf.

² AFR/CRL Poll: National Survey by Lake Research Finds Continued Strong Support for Financial Regulation, AMERICANS FOR FINANCIAL REFORM (July 7, 2015),

<http://ourfinancialsecurity.org/2015/07/new-afrcrl-poll-national-survey-by-lake-research-finds-continued-strong-support-for-financial-regulation/>. (After hearing a brief description of Dodd-Frank, “nearly three-quarters of likely 2016 voters (73%) say they favor it, including 80% of Democrats, 72% of Independents, and 65% of Republicans.” The poll also found that “voters also consistently favor the CFPB’s mission and enforcement actions. Support for the CFPB after voters hear a description of its purpose has held

using backroom deals to put the public interest at risk and deliver a wish list to narrow Wall Street interests.

Last year, we saw numerous attempts to undermine key financial reforms through “policy riders” that slip controversial policy changes into must-pass funding legislation. For example, the House Appropriations Committee’s 2016 Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill included a provision to remove independent funding for the CFPB, a limitation not placed on any other bank regulator.³ In the Senate, the Appropriations Committee approved a 2016 appropriations bill that incorporated over 200 pages of non-appropriations legislation attacking Dodd-Frank, including rollbacks of crucial protections affecting everything from risk management at giant financial institutions to safeguards against the kinds of toxic subprime mortgages that caused the financial crisis.⁴ And last year both the House and Senate Appropriations Committee passed legislation that included a rider that would have blocked new rules to protect retirement savings from conflicts of interest.

Fortunately, the full Congress eventually turned back these efforts. We urge you to again stand strong against such backroom strong-arm tactics this year. It is the right thing to do for the economy, and it is strongly supported by the public. In [one 2015 poll](#), nine out of ten likely voters agreed on the importance of regulating financial products and services in order to make sure consumers are treated fairly.⁵ Two-thirds of Americans, according to [another recent poll](#), believe we need more regulation of the financial industry, not less; and as the Washington Post commented, “that stance is near universal: there’s no large variation by gender, race, age and education level.”⁶

After the terrible lesson of the financial crisis, the least we can expect is that any proposals to weaken financial regulations be debated and voted on as stand-alone measures in an open process. The budget is not the place to try to force through provisions that are dangerous to economic stability, would not pass alone, or that the President would likely veto.

We strongly urge Members of Congress and Senators to oppose any flawed funding proposals that undermine the CFPB, the Dodd-Frank Act, the DOL’s conflict-of-interest rule, or other financial reform and accountability legislation or regulations.

Sincerely,

steady since last year at 75%, with 85% of Democrats, 74% of Independents, and 66% of Republicans in favor.”)

³ Letter to Congress: AFR, 22 Organizations Urge Congress Not to Undermine the CFPB, SEC, AMERICANS FOR FINANCIAL REFORM (June 16, 2015), <http://ourfinancialsecurity.org/2015/06/letter-to-congress-afr-22-organizations-urge-congress-not-to-undermine-the-cfpb-sec/>.

⁴ Letter to Congress: AFR, 23 Organizations Oppose Chairman Shelby’s “Financial Regulatory Improvement Act of 2015,” AMERICANS FOR FINANCIAL REFORM (May 20, 2015), <http://ourfinancialsecurity.org/2015/05/letter-to-congress-afr-23-organizations-oppose-chairman-shelbys-financial-regulatory-improvement-act-of-2015/>.

⁵ AFR/CRL Poll, *supra* note 2.

⁶ “Wall Street: A winning presidential punching bag — for both sides,” Washington Post (Oct. 20, 2015).

NATIONAL GROUPS

AARP

AFL-CIO

Alliance for a Just Society

Allied Progress

American Association for Justice

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Americans for Financial Reform

As You Sow

Center for Digital Democracy

Center for Effective Government

Center for Global Policy Solutions

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for Responsible Lending

Committee for the Fiduciary Standards

Communications Workers of America

Consumer Action

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety

Corporation for Enterprise Development

Consumers Union

CoolBranch

Demos

Fair Share

The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights

Main Street Alliance

NAACP

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Association of Consumer Advocates

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development

National Community Reinvestment Coalition

National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)

National Council of La Raza

National Fair Housing Alliance

National Manufactured Home Owners Association

National Organization of Women

National People's Action

National Women's Law Center

Pension Rights Center

PICO National Network

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse

Public Citizen

Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association

Rebalance IRA

ReFund America Project at the Roosevelt Institute

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The Corporation for Enterprise Development
The Other 98%
USAction
U.S. PIRG
UNITE HERE
United Steelworkers
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries
United Steelworkers, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service

STATE AND LOCAL GROUPS

Action NC, NC
Affordable Homeownership Foundation, FL
AL Arise, AL
Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice, Inc., AL
Alabama Arise, AL
Alabama NAACP, AL
Alaska Public Interest Research Group, AK
Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, Inc., NY
All Parks Alliance for Change, MN
Applewood Manufactured Homeowners Estate
Arizona PIRG, AZ
Arkansans Against Abusive Payday Lending, AR
Arkansas Community Organizations, AR
ARLA, AL
Association of Manufactured Home Owners, WA
Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., MD
Berks Community Action Program, Inc., PA
Birmingham Faith in Action, AL
California Coalition for Rural Housing, CA
California Reinvestment Coalition, CA
CALPIRG, CA
CASA de Oregon, OR
Catholic Charities, WA
Center for Economic Integrity - Arizona, AZ
Center for Economic Integrity - New Mexico Office, NM
Center for Financial Social Work, NC
Center for NYC Neighborhoods, NY
Center for Public Policy Priorities, TX
Central New York Citizens in Action, Inc., NY
Central Ohio Fair Housing Association, OH
Citizen Action Wisconsin
Citizens Creative, PA
Cleveland Housing Network, OH
Coalition for Transparency, AZ

Cocke County Habitat for Humanity, TN
Committee for Fiduciary Standard, NY
Community Frameworks, WA
Communities Creating Opportunity, MO
Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation, CO
Connecticut Association for Human Services, CT
Connecticut Fair Housing Center, CT
ConnPIRG, CT
Consumer Federation SE, FL
Consumers Council of Missouri, MO
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, CA
Cooperative Development Institute, MA
CoPIRG, CO
Courage Campaign, CA
CW Homes, LA
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, NY
Delaware Alliance for Community Advancement, DE
Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council, Inc., DE
Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Association, DE
Dominion Financial Management, Inc., TN
Empire Justice Center, NY
Empire State Consumer Project, Inc., NY
Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana, IN
Fair Housing Council of Central California, CA
Financial Pathways of the Piedmont, NC
First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, AL
Florida Alliance for Consumer Protection, FL
Florida PIRG, FL
GCFG, LLC, PA
Georgia PIRG, GA
Georgia Rural Urban Summit, GA
Glenwood Estates Home Owners Association
Global Capital Funding Group, LLC, PA
Golf Vista Home Owners Association
Gowen Consulting, AL
Granite State Organizing Project, NH
H & R Properties LLC, WI
Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte, NC
Homeless & Housing Coalition of Kentucky, KY
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, PA
Housing Community Development Network of NJ, NJ
Housing Help Inc., NY
Housing Justice Center, IL
Illinois Asset Building Group, IL
Illinois PIRG, IL
IN/KY Synod Payday Lending Task Force, IN

Indiana Association for Community Economic Development, IN
Innovative Changes, OR
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, MN
Interfaith Housing Services, Inc., KS
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, IA
Iowa PIRG, IA
Jacobs Keeley, PLLC, FL
Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, RI
Just Dance, IL
Kentucky Coalition for Responsible Lending, KY
Kentucky Equal Justice Center, KY
Keystone Progress, PA
Knoll Creek Siberians, IN
Lago de Plata Villa, WA
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, CA
Law Office of Philip H. Cahalin, LA
Lawyers for the Arts, WI
Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, Inc., CT
Legal Services of Southern Piedmont, NC
Louisiana Budget Project, LA
Lyon & Associates, NM
MA Affordable Housing Alliance, MA
Maryland CASH Campaign, MD
Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, MD
Maryland PIRG, MD
Massachusetts Consumers Council, Inc., MA
Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, MASSPIRG, MA
MHANY Management Inc., NY
MHDC, CA
Miami Valley Fair Housing Center, OH
Michigan United, MI
Minnesota Housing Partnership, MN
Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (MORE), MO
Montana Organizing Project, a project of Alliance of a Just Society, MT
Montebello Housing Development Corporation, CA
MoPIRG, MO
Mountain State Justice, WV
Mountainview Manufacture Home Community
Mutual Housing Association of New York Management Inc, NY
NCLA Interfaith, LA
NCPIRG, NC
NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, RI
NeighborWorks Umpqua, OR
Nela Interfaith, LA
New Jersey Citizen Action, NJ
New Jersey Tenants Organization, NJ

New Level Community Development Corp, TN
NHPIRG, NH
NJ NAACP, NJ
NJ PIRG, NJ
NMPIRG, NM
North Carolina Consumers Council, NC
North Carolina Justice Center, NC
North Carolina NAACP, NC
North Dakota Economic Security and Prosperity Alliance, ND
Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith, LA
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy, OH
Ohio PIRG, OH
Opportunity Fund, CA
Orchard Grove Home Owners Association
Oregon PIRG (OSPIRG), OR
Orrville Area United Way, NY
PA Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America, PA
Paradise Baptist Church, LA
Partners In Community Building, Inc., IL
PathStone Corporation, PA
PathWays PA
People for Change Coalition, MD
PennPIRG, PA
Pennsylvania Public Interest Network, PA
Philadelphia Unemployment Project, PA
PIABA, CA
PIRG in Michigan (PIRGIM), MI
Pisgah Legal Services, NC
PLAN Action Fund, NM
Pratt Area Community Council, NY
Progress Action North Carolina, NC
Project IRENE, IL
Public Justice Center, MD
Redeemer Hospitality Mission, IN
Reinvestment Partners, NC
Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty With Faith, RI
Rural Housing Opportunities Corporation
RIPIRG, RI
Samaritan Counseling Center of Greater Birmingham, AL
Sarah Poriss LLC, CO
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, SC
Serene Terrace Manufactured Homeowners Association, WA
Sisters of the Holy Spirit, TN
Society Saint Vincent de Paul, Philadelphia, PA
Sonary Crest Home Owners Association, AL
South Carolina Immigration Coalition, SC

South Carolina Progressive Network, SC
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, IN
Strong Economy for All Coalition, NY
Sunny Creek Homeowners Association, CA
Syracuse Habitat for Humanity, Inc., NY
Tewa Women United, NJ
Texas Appleseed, TX
TexPIRG, TX
The Bell Policy Center, CA
The Midas Collaborative, MA
THE ONE LESS FOUNDATION, PA
The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, AL
Tuscaloosa Citizens Against Predatory Lending, AL
US Uncut of Silver City, New Mexico, NM
Utah Coalition of Manufactured Homeowners, UT
Vermont Public Interest Research Group, VT
Vindland Investments, NY
Virginia Poverty Law Center, VA
Washington Community Action Network, WA
Washington PIRG
WashPIRG, WA
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, WV
Wildwood Home Owners Association of LaSalle Co., Inc., IL
Wisconsin Manufactured Housing Association, WI
WISDOM, WI
WISPIRG, WI
Woodstock Institute, IL
YWCA Central Alabama, AL