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Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
1700 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20552

Re: Request for Information: Civil Investigative Demands and Associated Processes

Docket No. **CFPB-2018-001**

April 18, 2018

Dear Ms. Jackson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB's) Request for Information ("RFI") regarding Civil Investigative Demands (CIDs) and associated processes.

Consumer Action (www.consumer-action.org) has been a champion of underrepresented consumers since 1971. A national, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, Consumer Action focuses on financial education that empowers low to moderate income and limited-English-speaking consumers to financially prosper. It also advocates for consumers in the media and before lawmakers and regulators to advance consumer rights and promote industry-wide change, particularly in the fields of consumer protection, credit, banking, housing, privacy, insurance and telecommunications.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was created after other regulators failed to combat widespread predatory practices in the financial marketplace. These failures led to a devastating financial crisis that impacted the entire nation. The Consumer Bureau has regularly used exhaustive analysis and the thoughtful engagement of all interested parties as it fulfills its mandate. So far the CFPB has returned nearly \$12 billion in relief to 29 million Americans.

The CFPB must not adopt changes to its processes for using civil investigative demands that would hurt or delay the Bureau's important work investigating potential legal violations. In particular:

- The Bureau must retain broad and flexible authority to investigate potential violations of the law and consumer harm.
- The ability to initiate investigations and to promulgate investigative demands must remain in the hands of senior professional staff and not be subject to political calculations.
- Bureau staff must retain the authority to initiate CIDs quickly and expect quick responses, without front-office bottlenecks or protracted appeal processes.
- Lawbreakers should not be given opportunities to delay, limit or hide evidence, or hamstring the Bureau.

Companies that have violated the law and abused the public trust will be eager to exploit any changes that the Bureau makes. Maintaining a robust, flexible and efficient investigation process is essential to the Consumer Bureau's mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

Linda Sherry
Director, National Priorities
Consumer Action

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