



December 4, 2017

The Honorable Michael Crapo
Chairman
Committee on Banking, Housing, And Urban Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing, And Urban Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee:

We write to urge opposition to S. 2155, the “Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act.” The financial marketplace does not need this so-called “regulatory relief” legislation. The bill overall would weaken protections for homeowners and expand the scope of risky activity for big banks and lenders to engage in at the expense of American consumers and the economy.

In particular, we’re concerned about provisions in the bill that would loosen protections in mortgage lending. For example, it would open up loopholes in disclosure requirements and remove safeguards for buyers of manufactured housing, as well as certain borrowers who would no longer be guaranteed escrow account services nor benefit from much needed appraisal requirements. Abusive and reckless mortgage lending and the failure to provide adequate protections to homebuyers contributed to the 2007-2008 financial crisis. The Committee should resist any action that would invite a return to the systemic predatory conduct that caused massive losses for millions of Americans.

It is clear that U.S. financial institutions have recovered from this recent crisis. In 2016 and 2017, U.S. banks and lenders amassed record profits.¹ Indeed, they have profited from the moderate controls and reasonable oversight implemented over the past decade. Meanwhile, tens of millions of consumers continue to hurt from the system’s failure to hold

¹ Patrick Rucker, *U.S. banks see record profits in 2016, few failing lenders: regulator*, REUTERS, Feb. 28, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-banks-fdic/u-s-banks-see-record-profits-in-2016-few-failing-lenders-regulator-idUSKBN1671V7>

financial institutions, such as Equifax and Wells Fargo, accountable for careless, deceptive, and fraudulent conduct.²

Instead of seeking to relieve profitable large and small banks from reasonable rules and responsibilities, we urge the committee to consider comprehensive consumer protections, including proposals that would: give consumers more control over their financial data and information; purge discrimination in lending; and restore individuals' ability to hold financial institutions accountable in court.

Please vote "no" on S. 2155. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Christine Hines
Legislative Director

² Marilyn Geewax, et al, *Equifax And Wells Fargo Apologize To Congress; Lawmakers Not Buying It*, NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/03/555334120/equifax-and-wells-fargo-apologize-to-congress-lawmakers-not-buying-it>