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Taskforce on Federal Consumer Financial Law: Status Update

Following the January 29-31, 2020 Taskforce orientation and planning meeting below is a brief status update on the overall work of the Taskforce. This update is accurate as of Wednesday, February 13, 2020 at 3:00PM Eastern:

Support Staff

- Interviewing and onboarding staff is the team's current top priority as work generated by the Taskforce is picking up exponentially.
- The team plans to hire two Economists. Greg Elliehausen started with the Bureau on February 6, 2020. He will serve a one-year detail. Candidates for the remaining open position were not satisfactory. The team has begun seeking recommendations for Economists to recruit.
- Interviews for two attorney-advisor positions were completed on February 13. One internal Bureau candidate has been recommended for a final interview to the Staff Director. The interview is scheduled for February 19.
- The team intends to leverage the open Taskforce Analyst position to hire between one to three qualified candidates. Two first round interviews have been scheduled for February 14.
- On February 13 the Bureau published a competitive detail for a Paralegal Specialist to assist the Taskforce. The posting closes on February 20 and is open to all federal employees.

External Engagement

- Jean Noonan, a member of the Taskforce is taking the lead on developing a Request for Information (RFI). The first draft is due by February 21 with the goal of releasing it to the public by March 9. The timeline is aggressive and will require expedited reviews internally. The RFI will be available to the public for a comment period of 45 days. If the team is unable to meet these established deadlines, the Staff Director will provide you with an updated timeline for release.
- The Taskforce is also beginning to work with partners in External Affairs (EA) in hopes of arranging one two-hour roundtable on March 10. The roundtable will be by invitation only, include a range of key stakeholders, and be framed as a listening session by Taskforce members. Taskforce members will be asked to limit their remarks to follow up questions only. The Taskforce will also participate in meetings with the CAB, CBAC, and CUAC on March 12 during their combined roundtable that is live streamed and open to the public. Additionally, the Taskforce will also participate in the ARC meeting on March 13 during their live streamed portion of the meeting.
- Deliberations are ongoing as to whether individual meetings with key stakeholders would add value to the report's recommendations.
- The Taskforce will also engage with partners in EA to begin conceptualizing intergovernmental engagements. The current recommendation is to arrange for meeting with National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS) to discuss strategies for improving interactions between Federal and state regulators. Likewise, the Taskforce intends to develop a strategy for engaging with the other Prudential Regulators to

seek input to the report, and then to provide an advance readout on the report prior to it being released publicly.

Internal Bureau Meetings

- The Staff Director and Chair have begun setting up monthly status updates with you and the Deputy Director pursuant to the Taskforce Charter. To aid in this discussion, the team is pulling together a high-level milestone schedule for the Taskforce report. Initial milestones need to be further refined and reasonably scheduled, but are to:
 - 1) begin to finalize contents of report by end of February;
 - 2) complete most of the discovery by end of April;
 - 3) draft critical analyses (of theme and products outlined in contents) by end of July;
 - 4) finalize a majority of recommendations by end of October; and
 - 5) refine report and submit to clearance by November 17, 2020.
- The team is arranging for several meetings that resulted from the cursory overviews provided during the orientation. Taskforce Members will be meeting with the Office of Innovation on February 20, 2020 in order to learn more about office goals, functions, and priorities. On the same day, the Taskforce Chair will meet with Dan Sokolov, Deputy Associate Director for RMR, to discuss a few topics learned during the orientation that they would like to learn more about. Part of that meeting will include discussion on how best to arrange those interactions while minimizing distractions to Bureau operations.

Readout on the January 30-31 Taskforce Planning Meeting

- Where possible and within time constraints, the Taskforce's final report will include considerations for the Bureau's 18 enumerated statutes; Unfair, Deceptive, and Abusive Acts or Practices; Title X; and Title XIV. During the latter part of the orientation, the Taskforce Members began deliberating which aspects of these should be prioritized for consideration, and how will the group structure their work.
- To help organize their thoughts, the Taskforce Members began developing how they will approach creating a table of contents. The initial thinking is:
 - Provide an historical review of credit, and specifically the origins, considerations, and outcomes of the Consumer Credit Protection Act of 1968 and the National Commission on Consumer Finance of 1972. The historical context would also examine trends in consumer credit through the financial crisis and an analysis of the Dodd-Frank Act.
 - The second section of the report will provide in-depth analyses of select themes and products. Some themes under consideration are consumer protection, competition, innovation, inclusion, consumer choice, privacy, and regulatory jurisdictions (to include improved coordination with state and the other Prudential regulators). More specifically, some of the products under consideration are small dollar lending, debt collection, credit reporting, and mortgages (including reviews of TILA/RESPA).
 - Finally, a third section would include recommendations based on the historical review and in-depth analyses. The recommendations might be framed by barriers and opportunities, and will fall into one of three categories:
 - Recommendations the Director of the Bureau can implement with the authorities established within Dodd-Frank;
 - Recommendations for new research to help inform the work of the Bureau; and
 - Recommendations for legislative changes that will help improve markets for consumers.