U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Warren:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our deep concerns about the attacks on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). This vital agency has protected consumers by holding Wall Street and predatory lenders accountable, promoting economic and racial justice for over two decades.

Since its creation in 2010, the CFPB has won more than $19 billion in relief for consumers ripped off by big banks and other financial wrongdoers. The agency pursued policies to rein in junk fees that cost families tens of billions of dollars each year, including finalizing a rule to cap excessive credit card late fees, and proposing limits on punitive overdraft fees. It also required fairer credit reports, reduced the harm of medical debt collections, fought inequity in home appraisals, increased consumer rights to control their own data, and implemented many more important policies to protect consumers.

Virginia Organizing is a statewide nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to empowering the voices of directly affected community members. One way that we have done that is to advocate for consumer protections and the work of the CFPB that has protected Virginians from exploitation and abuse by finance companies. Virginia Organizing fought for the CFPB from the beginning, having members attend hearings during its creation. Our organization stood in support when the CFPB introduced an important new rule to stop financial institutions from punishing hard working families, we held a press conference when its funding structure was challenged, and we spoke in support of a federal interest rate cap, among other important issues.

We've heard numerous stories of everyday Virginians who have fallen victim to payday loan companies that prey on people in need with limited options. These predatory loans hurt people, especially certain demographics who systemically earn less, making it harder for them to pay bills and save up for sudden expenses, like medical bills or car repairs. When there isn't enough money to pay for emergencies, even small problems escalate quickly. That is why Virginia Organizing has been intentional about promoting accountability for the continued efforts of the CFPB that are now under threat.

We need the CFPB because too many people have sought relief, only to be met with unjustly high fees and interest. We need the CFPB because without oversight, predatory lenders will continue to exploit consumers. And we need the CFPB because protecting people against financial abuse is right. Please support the CFPB and ensure that this accountability continues.

Sincerely,

Patrice Smallwood, Chairperson
Virginia Organizing
703 Concord Ave.
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 984-4655, info@virginia-organizing.org