



Consumer Federation of America



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 8, 2019

[CFA Link](#); [Facebook Post](#) and [Tweet this](#)

**See Contacts Below**

## **CONSUMER ADVOCATES FROM AROUND THE NATION TO MEET TODAY CONGRESS TO URGE STRONGER CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS**

Washington, D.C. – More than 120 consumer advocates from 29 states around the nation are heading to Capitol Hill today to meet with their members of Congress for the third annual Consumer Lobby Day and to urge stronger consumer financial protections for ordinary families living in their towns and cities. Advocates will be speaking to their representatives about predatory lending, forced arbitration clauses, and the need for a strong CFPB to enforce the rules of the road.

The advocates will engage with their U.S. Senators and Representatives on the following issues:

**Holding the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau accountable for delivering on its mission:** Under recent leadership, the Bureau has failed to effectively fulfill its core mission, has taken actions that seek to reduce burden on industry at the expense of consumers, and has neglected to enforce the law. The CFPB’s overall enforcement activity is down by 80% from the Bureau’s peak productivity in 2015 and average monetary relief to victims is down by 96% per case. The CFPB must return to its critical role of holding lawbreakers accountable.

Congress should also oppose any proposal—either from the Director or Congress—to compromise the CFPB’s independence. Prior to 2018, the CFPB effectively worked for consumers. The agency has a high level of accountability which should be used to ensure that it focuses on its mandate to protect consumers.

**Fixing the CFPB's proposed debt collection rule that opens consumers up to harassment and abuse.** The 538-page rule:

- **Allows too many telephone calls.** Collectors could make up to seven attempted calls per debt per week, potentially all in the same day. A student with 8 loans could receive 56 calls per week. *The CFPB should limit collectors to one conversation and three attempts per week per consumer.*
- **Allows texts and emails without consent.** Collectors would not have to get consumer consent to send emails or text messages and would not have to comply with the E-Sign Act to ensure that consumers actually have internet access. *Collectors should be required to obtain consent to send electronic communications and to comply with the E-Sign Act before sending key notices electronically.*
- **Permits violations of consumer privacy.** Debt collectors could leave “limited content” messages on voicemails that may not be private or with a person who answers the phone, including at a work number. *The CFPB should not exempt any forms of communication from the FDCPA and must require collectors to respect privacy in all communications.*
- **Fails to prevent abusive collection of time-barred zombie debt.** Collectors could pressure consumer to pay old debts that are beyond the legal statute of limitations to sue, potentially opening the consumer up to lawsuits by reviving the debt. The CFPB is testing disclosures, but any disclosures will only encourage abusive collection of these ancient debts. *The CFPB should ban the collection of time-barred debt, which is so old that collectors cannot legally sue, records are lost, and the debt cannot be collected without mistakes or deception.*

**Opposing all forms of predatory lending and the CFPB's proposal to roll back payday protections.** High cost payday loans and car title loans trap consumers in cycles of debt. The CFPB has proposed to do away with the core requirement of its 2017 rule that requires lenders to determine a borrower's ability to repay. The proposed rollbacks would prevent protections against debt traps from taking effect later this year.

**Adopting a national usury limit, and opposing attempts by high cost lenders to circumvent state rate caps.** The Military Lending Act set a 36% rate cap for a variety of lending products, including payday loans. All Americans could benefit from this common-sense cap, paving the way for affordable loans that consumers can repay.

**Passing the Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act (the FAIR Act) to eliminate forced arbitration in contracts:** Congress should restore the rights of harmed and wronged consumers, workers, and small businesses to seek justice against corporate misconduct. Forced arbitration clauses are in contracts for products and services such as credit cards, child care, cell

phones, car loans, home construction, student loans, payday loans, health insurance policies, and nursing homes.

The effort is being coordinated by the Consumer Federation of America and is co-sponsored by Americans for Financial Reform, Consumer Action, Consumer Reports, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Consumer Law Center, National Consumers League, Public Citizen, and U.S. PIRG.

**Contacts:**

[Leandra English](#) Director of Financial Services Advocacy and Outreach, Consumer Federation of America, 202-939-1009

[Carter Dougherty](#), Campaign Manager, Americans for Financial Reform, 202-466-4282

[Linda Sherry](#), Director of National Priorities, Consumer Action, 202-544-3088

[Ruth Susswein](#), Deputy Director of National Priorities, Consumer Action 301-718-2511

[Michael McCauley](#), Media Director, Consumer Reports, 415-902-9537

Christine Hines, Legislative Director, National Association of Consumer Advocates, 202-452-1989 x109

Jan Kruse, Director of Communications, National Consumer Law Center, 617-542-8010

Carol McKay, Vice President of Communications, National Consumers League, 412-945-3242

Susan Harley, Deputy Director, Public Citizen, 202-546-4996

Janet Domenitz, MASSPIRG Director, The State PIRGS, 617-292-4800

*[Consumer Federation of America](#) is an association of more than 250 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.*

*Americans for Financial Reform is a nonpartisan and nonprofit coalition of more than 200 civil rights, consumer, labor, business, investor, faith-based, and civic and community groups. Formed in the wake of the 2008 crisis, we are working to lay the foundation for a strong, stable, and ethical financial system – one that serves the economy and the nation as a whole.*

*Consumer Action has been a champion of underrepresented consumers nationwide since 1971. A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, Consumer Action focuses on consumer education that empowers low- and moderate-income and limited-English-speaking consumers to financially prosper. It also advocates for consumers in the media and before lawmakers to advance consumer rights and promote industry-wide change.*

*Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit membership organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world. For 80 years, CR has provided evidence-based product testing and ratings, rigorous research, hard-hitting investigative journalism, public education, and steadfast policy action on behalf of consumers' interests. Unconstrained by advertising or other commercial influences, CR has exposed landmark public health and safety issues and strives to be a catalyst for pro-consumer changes in the marketplace. From championing responsible auto safety standards, to winning food and water protections, to enhancing healthcare quality, to fighting back against predatory lenders in the*

*financial markets, Consumer Reports has always been on the front lines, raising the voices of consumers.*

*The National Association of Consumer Advocates (NACA) is a nonprofit association whose members are private and public sector attorneys, legal services attorneys, law professors, and law students committed to representing consumers' interests. NACA is actively engaged in promoting a fair and open marketplace that forcefully protects the rights of consumers, particularly those of modest means.*

*Since 1969, the nonprofit National Consumer Law Center® (NCLC) on behalf of its low-income clients has worked for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the U.S. through its expertise in policy analysis and advocacy, publications, litigation, expert witness services, and training. [www.nclc.org](http://www.nclc.org)*

*The National Consumers League, founded in 1899, is America's pioneer consumer organization. Our mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. For more information, visit [www.nclnet.org](http://www.nclnet.org).*

*Public Citizen is a national non-profit organization with more than 400,000 members and supporters. We represent the public interest through lobbying, litigation, administrative advocacy, research and public education on a broad range of issues including consumer rights in the marketplace, product safety, worker rights, workplace safety, financial regulation, safe and affordable health care, campaign finance reform and government ethics, fair trade, climate change and corporate and government accountability. Learn more at [citizen.org](http://citizen.org).*

*U.S. PIRG serves as the federation of state Public Interest Research Groups. PIRGs are non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organizations that take on powerful special interests on behalf of their members.*