

March 8, 2017

Senator  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Oppose bill or amendments to slash the CFPB's salaries

Dear Senator:

The undersigned consumer, community and civil rights organizations write to urge you to oppose any bill or amendment that would cut the salaries of the staff at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

CFPB employees are paid on a comparable scale to those in other financial regulators, including the FDIC, OCC, NCUA, SEC and CFTC. Indeed, the CFPB was created by consolidating many of the staff from those very agencies in order to streamline oversight. Like those agencies, the CFPB supervises financial institutions and enforces financial laws, and the agency needs to attract qualified staff. While the CFPB cannot match the salaries offered in the private financial industry, Congress has long recognized the need for financial regulators to pay off the GS scale in order to compete for the talent they need.

The CFPB's work is every bit as critical to the safety and soundness of financial institutions and the economy as a whole as that of other bank regulators. Indeed, it was the bank regulators' failure to look out for serious consumer protection issues that led to the collapse of the stock market, bank failures, and a devastating recession that harmed millions of Americans and businesses.

Slashing CFPB salaries below those of other financial regulators would undermine the agency's capacity to attract and retain highly-qualified financial professionals and give consumer protection a second class status. Few people interested in bank supervision and enforcement would join the CFPB when they could make more at other agencies. Moreover, the CFPB needs a diversity of expertise and perspectives within the agency, including people coming from the financial industry. Cutting salaries would make it extremely difficult to recruit such people.

Equally important, this proposal should be seen for what it is: an outright attack on consumer protection and effort to undermine the Consumer Bureau. Talented, hardworking people who are trying to protect the American public have already been attacked for doing their jobs. Cutting their salaries would simply be an effort to cause a flight from the agency and to demoralize those who remain.

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Any vote to cut CFPB salaries is a vote against consumer protection. We urge you to oppose any cut in CFPB salaries.

Yours very truly,

Allied Progress

Americans for Financial Reform

Consumer Action

Consumer Federation of America

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

NAACP

National Association of Consumer Advocates

National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)

Public Citizen

Reinvestment Partners.

Tennessee Citizen Action

U.S. PIRG