

September 3, 2020

Acting Comptroller of the Currency
Brian Brooks
400 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20219
Delivered electronically

Re: Comments on Proposal “National Banks and Federal Savings Associations as Lenders” Docket ID: OCC-2020-0026

Dear Comptroller Brooks:

As people of faith concerned about the dignity and worth of all God’s children, we write to urge you to withdraw your proposed so-called “true lender” rule. By enabling nefarious partnerships between predatory lenders and banks who are willing to pose as the true lender for a fee, the “rent-a-bank” scheme blessed by the proposal would trample consumer protections. With the intentional effect of allowing non-bank lenders to effectively pay for a bank’s exemption from state interest rate caps, predatory lenders will be free to charge far in excess of the usury cap in the states where they operate. This disrespects the right of states to set and enforce usury caps that prevent predatory lending.

We are seeing the pain and suffering of our families, both in our faith communities and elsewhere. Predatory loans are only making this suffering worse. In fact, we are a decade after the Great Recession and 1 out of 3 Americans still have not recovered, including many economically vulnerable families. At a time of great economic peril in our nation, we urge you to withdraw this proposal and focus instead on supporting hardworking people with fair and responsible resources.

Forty-five states set caps on installment loans that could simply be ignored by high-cost lenders who partner with banks and set about making loans with terms that create a harmful cycle of debt. And sixteen states plus the District of Columbia cap interest rates on payday loans around 36% to stop this predation. Your proposal would also give predatory lenders a green light to enter those states and set up shop with lending machines designed to drain wealth from those who have the least.

Scripture states in Proverbs 22:22 “do not rob the poor because they are poor.” Our faith communities have worked long and hard to stop predatory lenders from robbing families and vulnerable communities of their very dignity, making it more difficult to care for their basic needs, provide for their children, and build futures with financial stability and prosperity.

Existing state rate caps of around 36% APR allow for responsible products to thrive and flourish in the marketplace. They also serve as a bulwark against predatory actors. Unfortunately, while there have been efforts to pass a national 36% rate cap for all Americans, as well as a federal rule by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to institute an ability-to-repay standard, both have been stalled and Americans lack these commonsense protections.

We strongly oppose your proposed rule, and urge you instead to respect the authority and responsibility of states to enact strong consumer protections. American families deserve better and God requires more.

Sincerely,

The Faith and Credit Roundtable

National Faith Organizations

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S Provinces

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Good Faith Media

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Baptist Convention USA Inc.

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

State/Regional Ministry, Church, or Faith Organizations

Church Women United in North Carolina

Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

First Baptist Church, East Elmhurst, New York

First Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky

Grace Church, Indiana

Holy Family Church's St. Vincent De Paul Society, Peoria, Illinois

North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church

Olive Branch Ministries, Somerset, Kentucky

Royal Lane Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Texas

Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission, Nashville, Tennessee

Word For Transformation Church, Raleigh, North Carolina

Individual Faith Leaders

Carrie B Bearden, PhD

Buechel Park Baptist Church

Louisville, Kentucky

Mikael Broadway

Shaw University Divinity School

Raleigh, North Carolina

Dr. Bill Bruster, Retired Pastor

Dallas, Texas

Robert W. Coleman

Wilshire Baptist Church

Dallas, Texas

Stephen Cook, Senior Pastor
Second Baptist Church
Memphis, Tennessee

Dr. David Currie, Retired Executive Director
Texas Baptists Committed
San Angelo, Texas

Dr. Chris Ellis
Second Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Reverend Sharon Felton
Faith Baptist Church
Georgetown, Kentucky

William Carter Felton
President's House Association
Georgetown, Kentucky

Jim Forck
Society of Saint Vincent DePaul, Holy Family Church
Peoria, Illinois

Linda Francis
Wilshire Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

Sheila Gilbert
Society of Saint Vincent DePaul
Indianapolis, Indiana

Reverend Jennifer L. Hawks
McLean Baptist Church
McLean, VA

Stephen Ray Hemphill
Second Baptist Church
Liberty, Missouri

Dr Myra Ann Houser, Lay Person
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Reverend Rodney M. Hunter
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church
Richmond, Virginia

Reverend Dr Charles E. Goodman
Tabernacle Baptist Church
Augusta, Georgia

Susan Leonard
Wilshire Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

Mary Anne Michelet
Society of Saint Vincent DePaul, Holy Family Church
Peoria, Illinois

Jimmy Shaffer
Faith Baptist Church
Georgetown, Kentucky