

InfoBytes

FINANCIAL SERVICE HEADLINES & DEADLINES FOR OUR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS

February 10, 2012

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Federal Issues

FinCEN Finalizes New Anti-Money Laundering Rules for Nonbank Mortgage Lenders and Originators. On February 7, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) <u>released a final</u> <u>rule</u> that subjects nonbank residential mortgage lenders and originators to certain anti-money laundering (AML) regulations already applicable to other types of financial institutions. Under the <u>new</u> <u>regulations</u>, nonbank lenders and originators will be required to establish anti-money laundering programs and file suspicious activity reports (SARs). The regulations take effect sixty days after being published in the Federal Register. Covered firms will have 180 days after publication to comply. For additional details, <u>please see BuckleySandler's recent Special Alert about this final rule</u>.

NCUA Publishes Advance Notice Regarding Use of Financial Derivatives Transactions to Offset Interest Rate Risk. On February 3, the NCUA <u>published a second advance notice of</u> <u>proposed rulemaking</u> seeking additional comments to identify the conditions for federal credit unions to engage in certain derivatives transactions to offset interest rate risk. The second notice follows <u>one</u> <u>issued in June 2011</u>, which requested comment on potentially modifying NCUA's rule on investment and deposit activities to allow such derivative transactions. The current notice focuses on the ability of federal credit unions to independently engage in derivative transactions, without the oversight of a third-party provider. The NCUA is seeking comment on eligibility requirements and safety and soundness considerations that might limit the types of derivatives that federal credit unions may use, exposure limits, and counterparty risk. Comments responding to the notice must be received by April 3, 2012.

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adherence to interest rate risk limits, and (v) decision-making that is informed and guided by interest rate risk measures. The new rule applies to all FICUs with assets greater than \$50 million and to any FICU with assets between \$10 million and \$50 million that has a Supervisory Interest Rate Risk Threshold ratio (SIRRT ratio) greater than 1:1. FICUs can calculate their SIRRT ratio by adding together their portfolios of first mortgage loans and investments with maturities greater than five years, and dividing that figure by the FICU's net worth. The final rule also contains guidance on how to develop an interest rate risk policy and program that is based on generally recognized best practices for safely and soundly managing interest rate risk. The rule is effective September 30, 2012.

State Issues

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Illinois also announced two additional new housing efforts in early February. First, the <u>Illinois</u> <u>Foreclosure Prevention Network</u>, a multi-agency effort coordinated by the IHDA, will connect struggling homeowners with assistance and resources to prevent foreclosures. Second, the <u>Illinois</u> <u>Building Blocks Program</u>, also administered by the IHDA, will focus on six communities and provide (i) financing to rehabilitate vacant properties to prepare them for productive use and sale, (ii) assistance to homeowners to purchase homes in pilot communities, and (iii) support for existing homeowners in the communities to prevent additional foreclosures.

South Carolina Bans Transfer Fee Covenants. On February 1, South Carolina <u>enacted legislation</u> that deems any transfer fee covenant recorded after February 1, 2012, to be non-binding and nonenforceable. Generally, a transfer fee covenant is a deed provision that requires a current owner or successor in title to pay a fee to the owner who added the covenant to the property each time the property is transferred. Covenants recorded before February 1 remain valid and enforceable only if a Notice of Transfer Fee Covenant is filed by July 30, 2012 in each county in which the real property subject to the transfer fee covenant is located. The Notice must contain information such as (i) how the transfer fee covenant is calculated, (ii) actual dollar-cost examples for a home priced at \$250,000, \$500,000, and \$750,000, (iii) how and if the transfer fee covenant expires, and (iv) instructions and contact information concerning the payment of the fee required by the transfer fee covenant.



Courts

Petitioners Withdraw Major Fair Housing Case Pending Before U.S. Supreme Court. On February 10,

<u>several media outlets reported</u> that a major fair housing case under review by the U.S. Supreme Court had been dismissed by agreement of the parties. The case, *Magner v. Gallagher*, No. 10-1032, <u>described previously in a BuckleySandler alert</u>, poses the question of whether disparate impact claims are cognizable under the Fair Housing Act. The result of the Supreme Court review would have had profound impact both in private litigation and government enforcement actions, and as such had drawn significant attention from civil rights groups, state attorneys general, and financial services trade groups. The City of St. Paul, which raised the question on appeal, reportedly decided not to pursue the appeal out of concern that "a victory could substantially undermine important civil rights enforcement throughout the nation." Instead, the City will now take its case to trial in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota. For additional reports regarding these developments, please click <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>.

Federal and State Officials Announce Mortgage Servicing Settlement. On February 9, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, and several other state and federal officials jointly announced an approximately \$25 billion agreement in principle between the federal government, 49 state attorneys general and the five largest mortgage servicers to settle various mortgage servicing and foreclosure related issues. Oklahoma Attorney General E. Scott Pruitt later announced an "independent mortgage settlement" between Oklahoma and the five servicers. In addition to the financial compensation offered in the settlement, the servicers will conduct future business under new servicing standards, which include (i) restrictions on the default management process known as "dual tracking", (ii) a requirement for the institutions to provide a single point of contact for borrowers, (iii) specific protections for military service members beyond those provided by the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, (iv) obligations concerning disclosures and practices related to force-placed insurance, and (v) limitations on servicing fees. The standards also require the servicers to establish (i) updated foreclosure and bankruptcy documentation processes, (ii) enhanced servicer oversight of third party vendors, and (iii) adherence to a new set of loan modification timelines. For additional information concerning the settlement, please see BuckleySandler's recent Special Alert.

FTC Announces Settlement With Debt Relief Service Operators. On February 8, the <u>FTC</u> announced it had settled with four defendants alleged to have operated a phony debt relief service. According to the FTC, the defendants used illegal robocalls to falsely promise consumers lower credit card interest rates in exchange for a \$995 fee, and falsely promised refunds. The operation allegedly netted over \$13 million from over 13,000 consumers. The FTC's complaint alleges that instead of negotiating lower rates for consumers, the defendants at most tried to arrange three-way phone calls with credit card companies for some consumers. The defendants agreed in the settlement to be banned from robocalling consumers and from selling debt relief services, and to pay a \$13.1 million judgment, which will be suspended upon payment of \$159,000 by the settling defendants. Defendants' assets are subject to sale by a receiver to recover additional funds. The settlement also



bars the defendants from a variety of misleading or illegal practices related to phone contacts to consumers.

FTC Warns That Mobile Background Screening Apps May Violate FCRA. On February 7, the <u>FTC announced</u> that it had warned three mobile application marketers that their mobile background screening applications may be violating the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). The FTC described some of the six applications at issue as including criminal record histories, which are a type of information typically used in employment and tenant screening. While the FTC has not made a determination as to whether these firms are violating FCRA, it reminded the companies that if they have reason to believe the mobile applications include information about individuals' character, reputation, or personal characteristics that is used or expected to be used for purposes such as employment, housing or credit, the marketers and their customers must comply with FCRA. Under FCRA, firms that assemble or evaluate such information to provide to third parties qualify as consumer reporting agencies and are required to (i) take reasonable steps to ensure the user of each report has a "permissible purpose" to use the report, (ii) take reasonable steps to ensure the maximum possible accuracy of the information conveyed in its reports, and (iii) provide users of its reports with information about their obligations under the FCRA.

Nineteen States Settle With Debt Collector Over Collection Practices. On February 6, nineteen state attorneys general <u>announced a multi-state settlement</u> with NCO Financial Systems, a debt collection company, to resolve allegations of misleading and deceptive debt collection practices. Under the agreement, the company must set aside \$950,000 (\$50,000 for each state) for consumer restitution, and will pay \$575,000 for state consumer protection enforcement efforts. Restitution will go to consumers who paid the company for debts the consumers did not owe, who overpaid interest, or who overpaid a debt beyond what the company had agreed to settle an account. The company also agreed to (i) comply with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, and all applicable state laws, (ii) notify credit reporting agencies within 30 days of consumer disputes and results of investigations into disputes, (iii) provide notice to consumers about their debt collection rights under federal and state law, and (iv) monitor compliance, create written policies and procedures for handling consumer complaints, and submit periodic compliance reports.

Missouri AG Announces "Robosigning" Indictment. On February 7, <u>Missouri Attorney General</u> <u>Chris Koster announced</u> that a grand jury had returned a 136-count indictment against DOCX, LLC, and its founder, for alleged "robosigning" by forgery and false declarations with regard to mortgage documents. The indictment alleges that the signatures on 68 notarized deeds of release submitted to one county recorder were forged and constituted false declarations. If convicted, the founder could face up to seven years in prison per count, and the company could be fined up \$10,000 for each forgery and \$2,000 for each false declaration.

Medical Device Manufacturer Resolves FCPA Enforcement Actions for \$22.2 Million. On February 6, the <u>U.S. Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission announced</u> resolved FCPA enforcement actions against a domestic medical device manufacturer and its UKbased parent company. The combined monetary sanction totals \$22.226 million, and the UK parent must retain an independent compliance monitor for a period of eighteen months. The conduct in



question, as alleged in the <u>SEC Complaint</u>, involved the use of three UK shell companies created by a distributor in Greece for use as conduits to make payments to physicians in Greece working "at publicly-owned hospitals [and who were] government employees, providing healthcare services in their official capacities." The commercial relationship between the device manufacturer and the distributor ended in 2008. More details are available in an <u>update from BuckleySandler's FCPA Team</u>. To remain current on FCPA and anti-corruption developments, please view <u>BuckleySandler's FCPA Score Card</u>.

Idaho Supreme Court Holds Standing Does Not Need To Be Proven Prior To Nonjudicial Foreclosure. On January 25, the Idaho Supreme Court <u>held that a party is not required</u> to prove it has standing before foreclosing nonjudicially on a deed of trust. *Trotter v. Bank of New York Mellon*, No. 38022, 2012 WL 206004 (Idaho Jan. 25, 2012). Prior to a scheduled trustee's sale, the borrower filed a complaint alleging lack of standing to foreclose, and challenging MERS' ability to assign the loan. The district court granted the bank's motion to dismiss, finding that the statutory requirements for nonjudicial foreclosures had been satisfied, and that MERS was the beneficiary under the deed of trust and had properly assigned its rights as beneficiary to the bank. The Idaho Supreme Court affirmed, noting that "the plain language of the statute makes it clear that the trustee may foreclose on a deed of trust if it complies with the requirements contained within the Act" and that unlike judicial foreclosures, "there is no statutory requirement for the trustee to prove standing before initiating a nonjudicial foreclosure on a deed of trust."

New York Federal Court Affirms Enforceability Of Terms Of Service Available By Hyperlink. On January 24, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York <u>held in *Fteja v. Facebook*</u> *Inc.*, No. 11-918, 2012 WL 183896 (S.D.N.Y. Jan. 24, 2012), that an experienced Internet user received adequate notice to be bound by Facebook's Terms of Service when he pushed a button indicating his assent to the terms, which were available via a hyperlink near the button. The user had sued Facebook in New York state court for allegedly wrongly terminating his account. When Facebook removed the case to federal court and moved to transfer the action to the Northern District of California, citing the mandatory forum selection clause in its Terms of Service, the user argued that the Terms were unenforceable because he never saw or agreed to them. The court granted Facebook's motion to transfer after finding that Facebook's signup process "reasonably communicated" the Terms despite a second step, clicking the hyperlink, being required to view the Terms.

Firm News

David Krakoff will be participating in a panel at the <u>International Association of Defense Counsel's</u> <u>Midyear Meeting</u> in Palms Springs, California on February 15, 2012. The panel is entitled "Worldwide Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Laws-Navigating the International Business Minefield."

<u>James Shreve</u> will be participating in the panel "When the Cloud Goes Bust: Data Breaches in the Cloud" on February 28, 2012 at the <u>RSA Conference</u> in San Francisco, CA. The panel will examine unique issues that may arise when a data security breach involves a company's data stored in a cloud and provide guidance on addressing cloud security breach incidents.

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<u>Margo Tank</u> will be participating in a panel at the NACHA - The Electronic Payments Association's Internet Council Meeting in Tampa, Florida on February 29, 2012. The panel will explore the beneficial and harmful effects of data collection and usage, particularly as enabled by a mobile wallet.

<u>Donna Wilson</u> will be speaking at the ABA Section of Litigation Insurance Coverage CLE Seminar held at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona from March 1-3, 2012. Ms. Wilson will be representing the defense counsel perspective in a plenary session panel entitled "The Credit Crisis and D&O Insurance Coverage: Challenges facing Insureds, Insurers, and Regulators" on March 1 from 1:00 PM to 2:10 PM.

<u>Andrew Sandler</u> will be speaking at PLI's A Guide to Financial Institutions 2012 Program in New York on March 6, 2012 at 4:00 PM in a session entitled "The New Era of Consumer Protection & Enforcement: The CFPB & Other Initiatives."

<u>Margo Tank</u> and <u>James Shreve</u> will be speaking on the panel "Meeting Consumer Protection Requirements in Mobile Payments" at the International Association of Privacy Professionals Global Privacy Summit in Washington, DC on March 7, 2012. The panel will explore the unique and often complex compliance issues for those involved in mobile payments. James Shreve also will be leading the panel "Addressing the Latest Wave of Global Breach Notice Requirements" at the IAPP Summit on March 7. This panel of attorneys from several countries will explore new US and international security breach notification requirements and compliance issues in addressing cross-border incidents.

<u>David Baris</u> will be speaking on March 13, 2012 at the ICBA 2012 Annual Convention in Nashville, Tennessee in a session entitled "How Do Publicly Held Community Banks and Holding Companies Comply?"

<u>James Parkinson</u> will be chairing a panel at the International Bar Association's 10th Annual Anti-Corruption Conference in Paris, France on March 13 and 14, 2012. The panel is entitled: "The Privileged Profession: Risks faced by legal professionals advising in international transactions."

Donna Wilson will be participating in a CLE webinar entitled "<u>Consumer Finance Class Actions:</u> <u>FCRA and FACTA: Leveraging New Developments in Certification, Damages and Preemption</u>" on March 21, from 1:00pm-2:30pm EDT.

David Baris will be speaking in the ABA Banking Law Committee CLE panel, "<u>Dealing with</u> <u>Enforcement Actions and Insider Liability</u>," in Las Vegas on March 23, 2012.

Jonice Gray Tucker will be speaking at the <u>ABA Banking Law Committee's Spring Meeting</u> in Las Vegas on March 23, 2012 on a panel entitled "The CFPB Approaches One Year: Experiences and Exposures." The panel will include speakers from PNC Financial Services Group, PayPal, Treliant Risk Advisors, the Consumer Federation of America, and the Federal Trade Commission.

<u>Andrew Sandler</u> will moderate a panel at the American Conference Institute's 8th National Forum on Residential Mortgage Litigation and Regulatory Enforcement on March 29, 2012 in Washington, DC.



The panel is titled, "<u>Complying With and Responding to New and Emerging Federal and State</u> <u>Enforcement Actions</u>."

<u>David Baris</u> will be speaking at the 2012 Virginia Bank Directors Symposium on March 29, 2012 in Tysons Corner, Virginia. Mr. Baris will discuss how bank directors can minimize their risk of personal liability.

David Baris will be speaking at the NACD/AABD Bank Director Workshop on April 12, 2012 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The topic of the presentation is "Bank Director Liability and Practical Steps to Minimize It."

James Parkinson will be speaking at a PLI program seminar entitled "Foreign Corrupt Practices Act 2012" in San Francisco, California on April 17, 2012 and in New York, New York on May 4, 2012.

Firm Publications

<u>Jeremiah Buckley</u> published an article in American Banker on February 1, 2012 entitled "<u>State</u> <u>Attorneys Generals Are the New Bank Regulators</u>." The article notes that spurred by the financial crisis and its impact on their constituents, state attorneys general appear to be carving out a new role as de facto bank regulators. This trend, an unexpected fall out of the financial crisis and the passage of Dodd-Frank, may not as yet be fully appreciated. However, it seems increasingly clear that state AGs will be important arbiters of the way banks do business on a going forward basis.

<u>Kirk Jensen</u> and <u>Jeffrey Naimon</u> published an article entitled, "The Fair Housing Act, Disparate Impact Claims, and *Magner v. Gallagher*: An Opportunity to Return to the Primacy of the Statutory Text" in the February 2012 volume of *The Banking Law Journal*. The authors discuss the text of the Fair Housing Act, its legislative history, and the past federal appellate court decisions holding that the FHA permits disparate impact claims. They argue that recent Supreme Court decisions cast doubt on the past federal appellate court decisions, and show that the statutory text of the FHA, unlike the text of some other civil rights laws, does not permit disparate impact claims. They also discuss the case currently pending before the Court in which the Court may address for the first time whether the FHA permits disparate impact claims. <u>Click here for a copy of the full article</u>.

Mortgages

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Medical Device Manufacturer Resolves FCPA Enforcement Actions for \$22.2 Million. On February 6, the

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<u>U.S. Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission announced</u> resolved FCPA enforcement actions against a domestic medical device manufacturer and its UK-based parent company. The combined monetary sanction totals \$22.226 million, and the UK parent must retain an independent compliance monitor for a period of eighteen months. The conduct in question, as alleged in the <u>SEC Complaint</u>, involved the use of three UK shell companies created by a distributor in Greece for use as conduits to make payments to physicians in Greece working "at publicly-owned hospitals [and who were] government employees, providing healthcare services in their official capacities." The commercial relationship between the device manufacturer and the distributor ended in 2008. More details are available in an <u>update from BuckleySandler's FCPA Team</u>. To remain current on FCPA and anti-corruption developments, please view <u>BuckleySandler's FCPA Score Card</u>.

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