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Statement for the Record

Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs

“Oversight of the Credit Reporting Agencies”

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Chairman Brown, Ranking Committee Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, I am Brian Cassin, CEO of Experian. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the important work Experian does for the benefit of consumers, lenders, and the US economy.

Let me begin by stating why credit bureaus exist, how consumers benefit, and how our work provides underlying stability to the entire consumer credit ecosystem.

Credit bureaus accurately compile consumers' payment histories reported to us by individual creditors so that all lenders can use this data to make sound underwriting decisions. Good lending decisions mean fewer defaults. Fewer defaults reduce the cost of credit and increase the availability of consumer credit across the economy. Because credit bureau data does not include demographic factors such as race, color, religion, and gender, it also helps lenders make non-biased lending decisions in compliance with the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

Experian wholly understands its clear statutory obligations: ensure the information we hold on consumers is secure; make credit reports accurate; and provide a method to correct data that is easy for consumers to access and use.

Experian supports this committee's goal of enhancing the accuracy of credit reports, improving consumers' experience through the dispute resolution process, and making fair and affordable credit available to all communities.

Experian has invested heavily in systems and processes to improve data accuracy as we continually strive to reach 100 percent accuracy. We work with approximately 10,000 lenders and other data contributors across the spectrum of consumer lending, including credit card, auto, mortgage, retail, and fintech and we have stringent requirements and monitoring programs in place to ensure that our furnishers are submitting accurate information to us.

An important component of accuracy is a consumer's right to review their own credit report and correct errors. With millions of free reports and scores in the ecosystem monthly, consumers have easy and free access to their credit information, including through annualcreditreport.com, which provides free weekly reports to consumers. Experian has a free online dispute portal, including a mobile-optimized website and app. Consumers can also easily reach us by telephone or mail.

Mr. Chairman, studies suggest that as many as 50 million American adults are unable to access fair and affordable credit, either because they have a very thin credit file or because they are completely credit invisible. We also understand that many consumers, particularly minorities and lower-income individuals, are often under-represented in the credit reporting system.

This is an area where Experian is at the forefront with the launch of Experian Boost in early 2019. Boost allows consumers for the first time to safely and easily opt-in to having proven payment information -- like utility, cell phone, rent, and video streaming services -- included directly in their credit report, which can improve their credit score.

In January 2022 we also launched Experian Go, a ground-breaking feature that helps consumers who are credit invisible to establish a financial identity with Experian so they can begin building a credit history.

Since its launch, more than 12 million consumers have come to Experian Boost to improve their credit score, and 130,000 consumers have used Experian Go to establish a financial identity. The results are notable: we estimate that consumers have been able to access billions of dollars in credit post-Boost, including credit cards, car loans, and mortgages. Experian is also providing access to free credit

monitoring, free credit reports, free credit scores, and financial education to more than 65 million US consumers.

I am proud of the work our employees do every day to help and empower consumers. We would like to continue to work with this Committee to identify other ways we can improve the system for consumers.

Thank you for inviting me to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.