

Ranking Member Tim Scott (R-S.C.)
Opening Statement
Full Committee Hearing
December 11, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your service on this committee since 2007 and the last several years as the Chairman of the committee. I'll say the cancelation of today's markup really is disappointing and frankly sours the tone. It is another example of the dysfunction and lack of transparency that is a last gasp of a lame-duck administration.

But now, we turn our attention to the Director of the CFPB, who also doesn't seem to accept the results of the November election.

As I mentioned earlier, after the November election – a historic win for Republicans and President Trump which delivered a mandate for this committee and for this Congress. I sent a letter to each and every federal agency under this committee's jurisdiction calling on them to cease all rulemaking activities.

It is paramount that President Trump can begin his administration on January 20th with a fresh slate to implement the economic agenda that the American people resoundingly voted for.

And this is not unreasonable. Last month the prudential regulators – the OCC, FDIC, NCUA, and Federal Reserve – agreed with me and committed to pausing rulemaking before the inauguration.

Yet, as we have seen time and time again with Director Chopra, he has ignored these calls and pressed forward with a unilateral partisan agenda.

Many of you have heard my Republican colleagues and I argue that the changes at the CFPB are absolutely necessary, that the agency is unaccountable to Congress.

And Director Chopra seems intent on proving this to be true.

Despite voter's clear message on election day, Director Chopra has advanced his agenda at a break-neck speed.

He has issued a final rule expanding the CFPB's own jurisdiction, issued a proposal seeking to upend the fraud prevention industry, has published multiple "studies" and "reports" to further his political agenda, and just this week published another rulemaking effort.

The Director has spent years at the CFPB pushing the Biden-Harris administration's partisan messaging on "junk fees," and seeking a boogeyman around every corner for the failed economic policies of the Biden administration.

Let me be clear: protecting consumers and building an economy that serves all Americans are principles that guide my work in the Senate, but we can do both without weaponizing our federal regulators.

Speaking of regulators abusing their authority, the longstanding issue of debanking and Operation Chokepoint have recently resurfaced.

I have focused on this issue for years and the patent inequality it represents for our legal businesses.

I have consistently called out our banking agencies for weaponizing their power, and private institutions for bending to the powerful here in Washington.

No legal business should ever be debanked.

This message is something that Director Chopra has latched onto since the election, including direct references to debanking in his last two rulemakings.

But make no mistake, the Director is not our ally in this fight, and the career bureaucrats at the CFPB are not either.

The Director's recent actions are little more than an attempt to expand the CFPB's jurisdiction and grant the agency more authority to pick winners and losers in the financial services system.

Unelected bureaucrats in Washington D.C. should not be deciding which businesses survive or fail based on their political agendas. All legal businesses should have the opportunity to succeed in America, just like every single American.

Washington should be focused on promoting the two greatest tools which can arm all Americans – choice and opportunity.

These were the tools that allowed me as a poor kid in South Carolina to grow up and own my own business, and now, lead the Republican side of the Senate Banking Committee.

America must continue to be the bedrock of opportunity, and our regulators must work to ensure this every single day. Regulation should provide guardrails, not roadblocks.

I look forward to working with the next Director of the CFPB to increase accountability at the Bureau.

And Director Chopra, I look forward to hearing that you will be resigning effective January 20th.

It is unacceptable to have an agency with a budget of almost a billion dollars outside of the appropriations process and we must find a way to address this issue.

I will end with this – a message of hope. I am hopeful that next Congress will allow this committee to return to regular order and pass legislation to increase opportunity for American families and small businesses across the country.