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Press Release

Waters, Green Call for Hearing with Senior Management at CFPB

April 2, 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. – At today's Financial Services' Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing to discuss allegations of discrimination and retaliation at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), **Congresswoman Maxine Waters** (D-CA) and **Congressman Al Green** (D-TX) expressed serious concern over the revelations of the witnesses and underscored the need for senior Bureau officials to come before the Committee and testify.

At the hearing, Waters expressed her concern that inviting a witness with a pending grievance before the Bureau undercuts the Committee's ability to focus on allegations of discrimination at the CFPB and other agencies. Rep. Waters was concerned about the revelations made in the witnesses' testimony and reiterated her desire for senior officials from the CFPB to be called to account.

Waters and Green issued a formal, written request for a hearing with senior management the CFPB, to allow members a more appropriate forum to evaluate and discuss the CFPB's personnel policies and practices. The letter, sent to Committee Chairman Jeb Hensarling and Subcommittee Chairman Patrick McHenry, [can be found here](#).

Waters is the Ranking Member of the full Committee and Green is the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee.

The letter reads, "As you have made clear your intentions to proceed with the hearing as scheduled, we believe it is essential that you immediately announce a follow-up, full Committee hearing, in which senior officials from the CFPB are made available to testify. In scheduling this follow-up hearing, we would ask that you not invite witnesses who may be involved in a confidential or on-going compliant or grievance resolution process, to avoid creating a legal basis for senior officials at CFPB to decline to testify."

Waters' full opening statement is below.

As prepared for delivery:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by underscoring the seriousness with which we take allegations of discrimination, retaliation and racial disparity at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) – or at

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any federal agency or private institution.

As someone who has dedicated my entire career to the principles of **equality, fairness and the rights of women and minorities** – I am of course deeply concerned by the revelations the witnesses will present here today.

I want nothing but swift justice for Ms. Martin. And I want to thank her for her service to our government – and to our country – as a member of our nation's military.

I want to focus on solutions. I want to know how serious this problem is so we can identify ways to correct it. I'm not interested in scoring political points on an issue as important as discrimination and retaliation. The record of the Democratic Party on matters such as this is unequivocal.

In the wake of the troubling American Banker article that revealed these problems at CFPB, Democratic members of this Subcommittee took action, calling on the CFPB's inspector General to conduct an official review of the agency's personnel practices and policies. We asked the same of the IGs at the other federal financial regulators under our Committee's jurisdiction.

Moreover, we have asked to learn more about the role of the Bureau's Office of Minority and Women Inclusion (OMWI) in dealing with these matters.

Mr. Chairman, while this hearing is supposed to be focused on allegations of discrimination at the CFPB, I'm concerned about bringing in a witness that has a pending grievance before the Bureau. This may very well undercut our ability to accomplish that objective.

We are concerned that because you have chosen to politicize this process, senior officials at CFPB have declined to appear before this Committee today.

The nature of this hearing has changed – from our goal to assist any and all employees who have been subject to discriminatory practices at CFPB – or any other agency. That's why we have asked the Inspector General to take a hard look at what's happening at these agencies – not only to help the party here before us – but to help the others who may have fallen victim to discriminatory practices as well.

In today's world, an unfair or discriminatory workplace for minorities and women employees will not be tolerated. And I would like to hear what the CFPB is doing to address this serious problem internally.

Mr. Chairman, if you want to have a robust and thoughtful debate on this issue, it is imperative that we do so through the regular committee process. We will always welcome a thorough investigation of discriminatory personnel practices within our financial regulatory agencies.

As a result, today we are sending you and Chairman Hensarling a formal request for a hearing with senior management the CFPB – including its Director – to allow Members on both sides of the aisle a more appropriate forum to evaluate and discuss the CFPB's personnel policies and practices.

At such a hearing, it is my hope we can learn more about the broader problem and identify possible solutions. Unfortunately, you have made achieving this goal impossible today.

And finally Mr. Chairman, I hope that in the future, your commitment to, quote, "ensure mistreatment of employees is not tolerated at CFPB," goes even further – to ensure that we end discriminatory practices within all areas of the federal government.

Thank you.

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