

California Joins Multiple States in \$10 Million Settlement with Robinhood for Failing Investors

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SACRAMENTO — The California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) announced today that it has joined a multi-state settlement with Robinhood Financial LLC, which will pay up to \$10.2 million in penalties for operational and technical failures that harmed main street investors.

The settlement stems from a North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) investigation spearheaded by state securities regulators from Alabama, Colorado, California, Delaware, New Jersey, South Dakota, and Texas regarding Robinhood's operational failures with respect to the retail market.

The investigation was sparked by Robinhood platform outages in March 2020, a time when hundreds of thousands of investors were relying on the Robinhood app to make trades. In addition, prior to March 2021, there were deficiencies at Robinhood in its review and approval process for options and margin accounts, weaknesses in the firm's monitoring and reporting tools, and insufficient customer service and escalation protocols that in some cases left Robinhood users unable to process trades even as the value of certain stocks was dropping.

"Today's multistate agreement represents states at their best – working together for the benefit of Main Street investors," said NASAA President Andrew Hartnett. "Robinhood repeatedly failed to serve its clients, but this settlement makes clear that Robinhood must take its customer care obligations seriously and correct these deficiencies."

The [order](#) sets out the following violations:

- Negligent dissemination of inaccurate information to customers, including regarding margin and risk associated with multi-leg option spreads.
- Failure to have a reasonably designed customer identification program.
- Failure to supervise technology critical to providing customers with core broker-dealer services.
- Failure to have a reasonably designed system for dealing with customer inquiries.
- Failure to exercise due diligence before approving certain option accounts.
- Failure to report all customer complaints to the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and state securities regulators, as may be required.

Robinhood neither admits nor denies the findings as set out in the States' orders.

Robinhood will provide access to a FINRA-ordered compliance implementation report to settling states. Robinhood retained an independent compliance consultant who made recommendations for remediation, which Robinhood has generally implemented.

One year after the settlement date, Robinhood will attest to the lead state, Alabama, that it is in full compliance with the FINRA-ordered independent compliance consultant's recommendations or has otherwise instituted measures that are more effective at addressing the recommendations.

“Online trading platforms provide Americans with convenient options to invest. But platforms such as Robinhood must comply with common-sense protections for investors and consumers as required by law,” said DFPI Commissioner Clothilde Hewlett. “Today’s agreement reflects the ongoing efforts by state securities regulators to protect investors and make sure that they are treated fairly by financial services firms.”

The DFPI found no evidence of willful or fraudulent conduct by Robinhood, and that Robinhood fully cooperated with the investigation.

The DFPI expects any person offering securities, lender, or other financial services provider that operates in California to comply with our financial laws. Investors may file a complaint directly with the DFPI if a company is suspected of using unlawful, unfair, deceptive, or abusive practice online (dfpi.ca.gov/file-a-complaint) or call toll-free at (866) 275-2677.

The **Department of Financial Protection and Innovation** administers the state’s lending and banking laws, the recent California Consumer Financial Protection Law, and the state’s securities laws, which govern broker-dealers, investment advisers, and commodities. The DFPI protects consumers, regulates financial services, and fosters responsible innovation. The DFPI protects consumers by establishing and enforcing financial regulations that promote transparency and accountability. We empower all Californians to access a fair and equitable financial marketplace through education and preventing potential risks, fraud, and abuse. Learn more at dfpi.ca.gov.

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