

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 940

To amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 4, 2025

Mr. HILL of Arkansas (for himself, Mr. MEUSER, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. MOORE of North Carolina, and Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fair Audits and In-
5 spections for Regulators’ Exams Act” or the “FAIR
6 Exams Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. TIMELINESS OF EXAMINATION REPORTS.**

2 The Federal Financial Institutions Examination
3 Council Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.) is amended
4 by adding at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 1012. TIMELINESS OF EXAMINATION REPORTS.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

7 “(1) FINAL EXAMINATION REPORT.—A Federal
8 financial institutions regulatory agency shall provide
9 a final examination report to a financial institution
10 not later than 60 days after the later of—

11 “(A) the exit interview for an examination
12 of the institution; or

13 “(B) the provision of additional material
14 information by the institution relating to the
15 examination.

16 “(2) EXIT INTERVIEW.—If a financial institu-
17 tion is not subject to a resident examiner program,
18 the exit interview shall occur not later than the end
19 of the 9-month period beginning on the commence-
20 ment of the examination, except that such period
21 may be extended by the Federal financial institu-
22 tions regulatory agency by providing written notice
23 to the institution and the Director describing with
24 particularity the reasons that a longer period is
25 needed to complete the examination.

1 “(b) EXAMINATION MATERIALS.—Upon the request
 2 of a financial institution, the Federal financial institutions
 3 regulatory agency shall include with the final report an
 4 appendix listing all examination or other factual informa-
 5 tion relied upon by the agency in support of a material
 6 supervisory determination.”.

7 **SEC. 3. INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION REVIEW DIRECTOR.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Financial Institu-
 9 tions Examination Council Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3301
 10 et seq.), as amended by section 2 of this Act, is further
 11 amended by adding at the end the following:

12 **“SEC. 1013. OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION RE-**
 13 **VIEW.**

14 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
 15 Council an Office of Independent Examination Review.

16 “(b) HEAD OF OFFICE.—There is established the po-
 17 sition of the Independent Examination Review Director,
 18 as the head of the Office of Independent Examination Re-
 19 view. The Director shall be appointed by the President,
 20 by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

21 “(c) STAFFING.—The Director is authorized to hire
 22 staff to support the activities of the Office of Independent
 23 Examination Review. One-fifth of the costs and expenses
 24 of the Office, including the salaries of its employees, shall
 25 be paid by each of the Federal financial institutions regu-

1 latory agencies. Annual assessments for such share shall
2 be levied by the Council based upon its projected budget
3 for the year, and additional assessments may be made dur-
4 ing the year if necessary.

5 “(d) DUTIES.—The Director shall—

6 “(1) receive and, at the discretion of the Direc-
7 tor, investigate complaints from financial institu-
8 tions, their representatives, or another entity acting
9 on behalf of such institutions, concerning examina-
10 tions, examination practices, or examination reports;

11 “(2) hold meetings, at least once every three
12 months and in locations designed to encourage par-
13 ticipation from all sections of the United States,
14 with financial institutions, their representatives, or
15 another entity acting on behalf of such institutions,
16 to discuss examination procedures, examination
17 practices, or examination policies;

18 “(3) review examination procedures of the Fed-
19 eral financial institutions regulatory agencies to en-
20 sure that the written examination policies of those
21 agencies are being followed in practice and adhere to
22 the standards for consistency, which shall be estab-
23 lished, after notice and opportunity for comment, by
24 the Council not later than 90 days after the date of
25 enactment of this section;

1 “(4) conduct a continuing and regular program
2 of examination quality assurance for all examination
3 types conducted by the Federal financial institutions
4 regulatory agencies;

5 “(5) carry out an independent review of any su-
6 pervisory appeal initiated under section 1014; and

7 “(6) report annually to the Committee on Fi-
8 nancial Services of the House of Representatives, the
9 Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
10 of the Senate, and the Council, on the reviews car-
11 ried out pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (5), includ-
12 ing compliance with the requirements set forth in
13 section 1012 regarding timeliness of examination re-
14 ports, and the Council’s recommendations for im-
15 provements in examination procedures, practices,
16 and policies.

17 “(e) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Director shall keep
18 confidential all meetings, discussions, and information
19 provided by financial institutions. The Council shall keep
20 confidential all information and communications ex-
21 changed by a financial institution and the Office of Inde-
22 pendent Examination Review.”.

23 (b) DEFINITION.—Section 1003 of the Federal Fi-
24 nancial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 (12
25 U.S.C. 3302) is amended—

1 (1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the
2 end;

3 (2) in paragraph (3), by adding “and” at the
4 end; and

5 (3) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(4) the term ‘Director’ means the Independent
7 Examination Review Director established under sec-
8 tion 1013(b).”.

9 **SEC. 4. RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF MATERIAL SU-**
10 **PERVISORY DETERMINATIONS.**

11 The Federal Financial Institutions Examination
12 Council Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.), as amended
13 by sections 2 and 3 of this Act, is further amended by
14 adding at the end the following:

15 **“SEC. 1014. RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF MATERIAL**
16 **SUPERVISORY DETERMINATIONS.**

17 “(a) IN GENERAL.—A financial institution shall have
18 the right to obtain an independent review of a material
19 supervisory determination contained in a final report of
20 examination.

21 “(b) NOTICE.—

22 “(1) TIMING.—A financial institution seeking
23 review of a material supervisory determination under
24 this section shall file a written notice with the Direc-

1 tor within 60 days after receiving the final report of
 2 examination that is the subject of such review.

3 “(2) IDENTIFICATION OF DETERMINATION.—

4 The written notice shall identify the material super-
 5 visory determination that is the subject of the inde-
 6 pendent examination review, and a statement of the
 7 reasons why the institution believes that the deter-
 8 mination is incorrect or should otherwise be modi-
 9 fied.

10 “(3) INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO INSTI-
 11 TUTION.—Any information relied upon by the agen-

12 cy in the final report that is not in the possession
 13 of the financial institution may be requested by the
 14 financial institution and shall be delivered promptly
 15 by the agency to the financial institution.

16 “(c) RIGHT TO HEARING.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall—

18 “(A) determine the merits of the appeal on
 19 the record; or

20 “(B) at the election of the financial institu-
 21 tion, refer the appeal to an administrative law
 22 judge appointed by the Director to conduct a
 23 hearing pursuant to the procedures set forth
 24 under sections 556 and 557 of title 5, United
 25 States Code, which shall take place not later

1 than 60 days after the petition for review is re-
2 ceived by the Director.

3 “(2) TIMING OF DECISION.—An administrative
4 law judge conducting a hearing under paragraph
5 (1)(B) shall issue a proposed decision to the Direc-
6 tor based upon the record established at the hearing.

7 “(3) STANDARD OF REVIEW.—In any hearing
8 under this subsection, neither the administrative law
9 judge nor the Director shall defer to the opinions of
10 the examiner or agency, but shall independently de-
11 termine the appropriateness of the agency’s decision
12 based upon the relevant statutes, regulations, other
13 appropriate guidance, and evidence presented at the
14 hearing.

15 “(d) FINAL RECOMMENDATION.—With respect to an
16 independent review under this section, the Director shall
17 make a final recommendation to the head of the agency
18 whose supervisory determination was the subject of the re-
19 view not later than 60 days after the record has been
20 closed.

21 “(e) FINAL AGENCY DETERMINATION.—Upon re-
22 ceipt of a final recommendation of the Director under sub-
23 section (d), the head of an agency shall make a final deter-
24 mination of the agency with respect to the material super-
25 visory determination not later than the 60 days after re-

1 ceiving the recommendation of the Director. In making
2 such final determination, the head of the agency shall give
3 deference to the recommendation of the Director.

4 “(f) RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW.—A financial insti-
5 tution shall have the right to petition for review of a final
6 agency determination made under subsection (e) by filing
7 a petition for review not later than 60 days after the date
8 on which the decision is made in the United States Court
9 of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit or the Cir-
10 cuit in which the financial institution is located.

11 “(g) REPORT.—The Director shall report annually to
12 the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Rep-
13 resentatives, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and
14 Urban Affairs of the Senate, and the Council on actions
15 taken under this section, including the types of issues that
16 the Director has reviewed and the results of those reviews.
17 In no case shall such a report contain information about
18 individual financial institutions or any confidential or priv-
19 ileged information shared by financial institutions.

20 “(h) RETALIATION PROHIBITED.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A Federal financial institu-
22 tions regulatory agency may not—

23 “(A) retaliate against a financial institu-
24 tion, including service providers, or any institu-

tion-affiliated party, for exercising appellate rights under this section; or

“(B) delay or deny any agency action that would benefit a financial institution or any institution-affiliated party on the basis that an appeal under this section is pending under this section.

“(2) RETALIATION.—For purposes of this subsection, retaliation includes delaying consideration of, or withholding approval of, any request, notice, or application that otherwise would have been approved, but for the exercise of a financial institution’s rights under this section.”.

SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) REGULATOR APPEALS PROCESS, OMBUDSMAN, AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 309 of the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994 (12 U.S.C. 4806) is amended—

(A) in the heading, by striking “**REGULATORY APPEALS PROCESS, OMBUDSMAN,**” and inserting “**OMBUDSMAN**”;

(B) by striking subsections (a), (b), and (c);

1 (C) by redesignating subsections (d), (e),
2 (f), and (g) as subsections (a), (b), (c), and (d),
3 respectively; and

4 (D) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—
5 (i) in paragraph (2)—

6 (I) in subparagraph (B), by
7 striking “and” at the end;

8 (II) in subparagraph (C), by
9 striking the period and inserting “;
10 and”; and

11 (III) by adding at the end the
12 following:

13 “(D) ensure that appropriate safeguards
14 exist for protecting any party from retaliation
15 by any agency for exercising rights under this
16 subsection.”; and

17 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-
18 lowing:

19 “(6) RETALIATION.—For purposes of this sub-
20 section, retaliation includes delaying consideration
21 of, or withholding approval of, any request, notice,
22 or application that otherwise would have been ap-
23 proved, but for the exercise of a financial institu-
24 tion’s rights under this section.”.

1 (E) in paragraph (1)(A) of subsection (c),
2 as so redesignated—

3 (i) in clause (ii), by striking “; and”
4 and inserting a semicolon;

5 (ii) in clause (iii), by striking “; and”
6 and inserting a semicolon; and

7 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(iv) any issue specifically listed in an
10 exam report as a matter requiring atten-
11 tion by the institution’s management or
12 board of directors; and

13 “(v) any suspension or removal of an
14 institution’s status as eligible for expedited
15 processing of applications, requests, no-
16 tices, or filings on the grounds of a super-
17 visory or compliance concern, regardless of
18 whether that concern has been cited as a
19 basis for a material supervisory determina-
20 tion or matter requiring attention in an ex-
21 amination report, provided that the con-
22 duct at issue did not involve violation of
23 any criminal law; and”.

24 (2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this subsection af-
25 fects the authority of an appropriate Federal bank-

1 ing agency or the National Credit Union Adminis-
2 tration Board to take enforcement or other super-
3 visory action.

4 (b) FEDERAL CREDIT UNION ACT.—Section 205(j)
5 of the Federal Credit Union Act (12 U.S.C. 1785(j)) is
6 amended by inserting “the Bureau of Consumer Financial
7 Protection,” before “the Administration” each place that
8 term appears.

9 (c) FEDERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS EXAMINA-
10 TION COUNCIL ACT.—The Federal Financial Institutions
11 Examination Council Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3301 et
12 seq.), as amended by sections 2 through 4 of this Act,
13 is further amended—

14 (1) in section 1003 (12 U.S.C. 3302) by strik-
15 ing paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

16 “(1) the term ‘Federal financial institutions
17 regulatory agencies’—

18 “(A) means the Office of the Comptroller
19 of the Currency, the Board of Governors of the
20 Federal Reserve System, the Federal Deposit
21 Insurance Corporation, and the National Credit
22 Union Administration; and

23 “(B) includes the Bureau of Consumer Fi-
24 nancial Protection for purposes of sections
25 1012 through 1014;”;

1 (2) in section 1004(a)(4) (12 U.S.C. 3303), by
2 striking “Consumer Financial Protection Bureau”
3 and inserting “Bureau of Consumer Financial Pro-
4 tection”; and

5 (3) in section 1005 (12 U.S.C. 3304)—

6 (A) by striking “One-fifth” and inserting
7 “One-fourth”; and

8 (B) by inserting “described under section
9 1003(1)(A)” after “agencies”.

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