

YOUR HOME, OUR MISSION. LEAD-FREE HOMES!

Slate Belt Rising is
offering **FREE** lead water
supply line safety checks!



SCHOLARSHIP

**2025 SLATE BELT RISING
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
NOW OPEN!**

OUR PROGRAM:

- ✓ Six - \$1,000 Scholarships Available
- ✓ Eligible to Bangor & Pen Argyl SD Residents

APPLICATION & GUIDELINES:

Visit: SlateBeltRising.org
Click on "Scholarship"
bfenstermaker@caciv.org
484-523-0900

Matching Donors

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO DONATE A KIDNEY TO SAVE A LIFE
DONATE YOUR BOAT, CAR, REAL ESTATE, OR PLANE!**

We take donations in
any condition, with
fast, free pickup.

Every donation is tax
deductible.

100% of the proceeds help
save the lives of people
needing organ transplants
on MatchingDonors.com,
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
organization.



Call us at 781-821-2204

or donate online at

MatchingDonorsDonations.com



Boscola Bulletin

INDEPENDENT. EFFECTIVE. YOUR VOICE IN HARRISBURG.

LISA BOSCOLA 18TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

Consumer Protection Agency Has Been Effective In Protecting Pa. Families From Unfair Business Practices; But There Is Still Work To Be Done

By Senator Lisa Boscola – 18th Senatorial District

One of my primary goals as an elected official has been to improve the lives of middle- and working-class families in Pennsylvania. As a proponent of job creation and economic development, I have worked with the private sector to cut red tape and ensure that government incentives make Pennsylvania businesses competitive. Working across the aisle to implement common sense reforms, help eliminate waste and create a more efficient government is a hallmark of my time in Harrisburg.

One of the most important functions of government is to protect taxpayers by holding bad actors accountable. As the Minority Chair of the Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee, I recognize that protecting consumers requires striking the right balance. Sometimes that involves government action; other times it means getting government out of the way. This is why I am concerned about recent actions in Washington to dismantle the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

The CFPB was created in response to the financial and foreclosure crisis that sent our economy into a long recession after 2008. You remember the recession that coincided with enormous taxpayer funded bailouts of big banks. The agency is charged with watching over banks, credit bureaus, debt collectors and online lenders.

The goal of the agency is to protect consumers against fraud, junk fees and unfair treatment. One tangible way the CFPB helps consumers is its system for collecting consumer complaints about financial companies and compelling the company to respond. No telephone trees, long hold times, or endless paperwork. Just results. Constituents often cite one of two things when they come into my office looking for help, either "When I call, I don't get to speak to a real person" or "No one ever calls me back." CFPB has worked to change that which helps people get answers.

The data is all online and searchable. Just by searching Allentown and Bethlehem zip codes you'll find over 12,700 examples of how CFPB has helped people — often getting responses in a matter of days. Since 2011 when the system started, Pennsylvanians have submitted more than 340,000 complaints.

In Allentown-Bethlehem, one complaint to CFPB prompted action from Bank of America on behalf of a customer who had been unfairly stuck with \$4,000 in fraudulent credit card charges. Another was able to resolve a \$1,000 mortgage payment problem with CFPB's help. Hundreds of complaints simply ended the frustrating runarounds with customer service centers. Thousands of people needed the CFPB to get their credit report cleaned up after a data breach, a careless error, or outright fraud denied them the ability to get a loan, a mortgage, or a credit card.

This system, which solves real problems for real people, may be dismantled. First, the toll-free complaint hotline (if people don't want to file online) has been shut down. Then, there have been reductions of employees that deal with serious, time-sensitive complaints. These actions have led many to believe that the goal is to make the agency disappear.

At the same time, Congress is looking to roll back new protections and slash CFPB's funding. Congress is expected to vote soon on rules that the CFPB created to cap bank overdraft fees and get medical debt off people's credit reports. Bank overdraft fees run as high as \$35, and the CFPB recently capped them at \$5, which would save people \$5 billion each year.

Another recent rule, prevents medical debt from being used to deny people credit. About 700,000 Pennsylvanians have medical debt on their credit reports — one in fourteen people in the Commonwealth. In most cases, getting sick is not something anyone can control, and medical debt is not a good or fair predictor of whether people repay their bills.

Rolling back the cap on bank overdraft fees and the medical debt rule does nothing to help working-class and middle-class families. In fact, it hurts them. The only winners from these changes are Wall Street Banks and small shady financial operations.

To have good government you need periodic reviews of agencies to weed out waste, fraud and abuse without eliminating the benefits these agencies provide to help ordinary citizens. The CFPB has been effective in protecting Pennsylvania families from unfair business practices; but there is still work to be done. Hopefully, Congress sees what is working at the CFPB and steps up to preserve it.