

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section subject to joint regulations establishing effective dates as prescribed by Federal Reserve Board and Federal Trade Commission, except as otherwise provided, see section 3 of Pub. L. 108-159, set out as an Effective Date of 2003 Amendment note under section 1681 of this title.

SUBCHAPTER IV—EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITY

§ 1691. Scope of prohibition

(a) Activities constituting discrimination

It shall be unlawful for any creditor to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction—

- (1) on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or marital status, or age (provided the applicant has the capacity to contract);
- (2) because all or part of the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program; or
- (3) because the applicant has in good faith exercised any right under this chapter.

(b) Activities not constituting discrimination

It shall not constitute discrimination for purposes of this subchapter for a creditor—

- (1) to make an inquiry of marital status if such inquiry is for the purpose of ascertaining the creditor's rights and remedies applicable to the particular extension of credit and not to discriminate in a determination of credit-worthiness;
- (2) to make an inquiry of the applicant's age or of whether the applicant's income derives from any public assistance program if such inquiry is for the purpose of determining the amount and probable continuance of income levels, credit history, or other pertinent element of credit-worthiness as provided in regulations of the Bureau;
- (3) to use any empirically derived credit system which considers age if such system is demonstrably and statistically sound in accordance with regulations of the Bureau, except that in the operation of such system the age of an elderly applicant may not be assigned a negative factor or value;
- (4) to make an inquiry or to consider the age of an elderly applicant when the age of such applicant is to be used by the creditor in the extension of credit in favor of such applicant; or
- (5) to make an inquiry under section 1691c-2 of this title, in accordance with the requirements of that section.

(c) Additional activities not constituting discrimination

It is not a violation of this section for a creditor to refuse to extend credit offered pursuant to—

- (1) any credit assistance program expressly authorized by law for an economically disadvantaged class of persons;
- (2) any credit assistance program administered by a nonprofit organization for its members or an economically disadvantaged class of persons; or
- (3) any special purpose credit program offered by a profit-making organization to meet

special social needs which meets standards prescribed in regulations by the Bureau;

if such refusal is required by or made pursuant to such program.

(d) Reason for adverse action; procedure applicable; "adverse action" defined

(1) Within thirty days (or such longer reasonable time as specified in regulations of the Bureau for any class of credit transaction) after receipt of a completed application for credit, a creditor shall notify the applicant of its action on the application.

(2) Each applicant against whom adverse action is taken shall be entitled to a statement of reasons for such action from the creditor. A creditor satisfies this obligation by—

(A) providing statements of reasons in writing as a matter of course to applicants against whom adverse action is taken; or

(B) giving written notification of adverse action which discloses (i) the applicant's right to a statement of reasons within thirty days after receipt by the creditor of a request made within sixty days after such notification, and (ii) the identity of the person or office from which such statement may be obtained. Such statement may be given orally if the written notification advises the applicant of his right to have the statement of reasons confirmed in writing on written request.

(3) A statement of reasons meets the requirements of this section only if it contains the specific reasons for the adverse action taken.

(4) Where a creditor has been requested by a third party to make a specific extension of credit directly or indirectly to an applicant, the notification and statement of reasons required by this subsection may be made directly by such creditor, or indirectly through the third party, provided in either case that the identity of the creditor is disclosed.

(5) The requirements of paragraph (2), (3), or (4) may be satisfied by verbal statements or notifications in the case of any creditor who did not act on more than one hundred and fifty applications during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the adverse action is taken, as determined under regulations of the Bureau.

(6) For purposes of this subsection, the term "adverse action" means a denial or revocation of credit, a change in the terms of an existing credit arrangement, or a refusal to grant credit in substantially the amount or on substantially the terms requested. Such term does not include a refusal to extend additional credit under an existing credit arrangement where the applicant is delinquent or otherwise in default, or where such additional credit would exceed a previously established credit limit.

(e) Copies furnished to applicants**(1) In general**

Each creditor shall furnish to an applicant a copy of any and all written appraisals and valuations developed in connection with the applicant's application for a loan that is secured or would have been secured by a first lien on a dwelling promptly upon completion,

but in no case later than 3 days prior to the closing of the loan, whether the creditor grants or denies the applicant's request for credit or the application is incomplete or withdrawn.

(2) Waiver

The applicant may waive the 3 day requirement provided for in paragraph (1), except where otherwise required in law.

(3) Reimbursement

The applicant may be required to pay a reasonable fee to reimburse the creditor for the cost of the appraisal, except where otherwise required in law.

(4) Free copy

Notwithstanding paragraph (3), the creditor shall provide a copy of each written appraisal or valuation at no additional cost to the applicant.

(5) Notification to applicants

At the time of application, the creditor shall notify an applicant in writing of the right to receive a copy of each written appraisal and valuation under this subsection.

(6) Valuation defined

For purposes of this subsection, the term "valuation" shall include any estimate of the value of a dwelling developed in connection with a creditor's decision to provide credit, including those values developed pursuant to a policy of a government sponsored enterprise or by an automated valuation model, a broker price opinion, or other methodology or mechanism.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §701, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1521; amended Pub. L. 94-239, §2, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 251; Pub. L. 102-242, title II, §223(d), Dec. 19, 1991, 105 Stat. 2306; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §§1071(b), 1085(1), title XIV, §1474, July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2059, 2083, 2199.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(1), substituted "Bureau" for "Board" wherever appearing.

Subsec. (b)(5). Pub. L. 111-203, §1071(b), added par. (5).

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 111-203, §1474, amended subsec. (e) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (e) read as follows: "Each creditor shall promptly furnish an applicant, upon written request by the applicant made within a reasonable period of time of the application, a copy of the appraisal report used in connection with the applicant's application for a loan that is or would have been secured by a lien on residential real property. The creditor may require the applicant to reimburse the creditor for the cost of the appraisal."

1991—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 102-242 added subsec. (e).

1976—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 94-239 designated existing provisions as cl. (1), expanded prohibition against discrimination to include race, color, religion, national origin and age, and added cls. (2) and (3).

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 94-239 designated existing provisions as cl. (1) and added cls. (2) to (4).

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 94-239 added subsecs. (c) and (d).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1071(d), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2059, provided that: "This section [enacting section 1691c-2 of this title and amending this section] shall become effective on the designated transfer date."

[The term "designated transfer date" is defined in section 5481(9) of Title 12, Banks and Banking, as the date established under section 5582 of Title 12.]

Amendment by section 1085(1) of Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

Amendment by section 1474 of Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the date on which final regulations implementing that amendment take effect, or on the date that is 18 months after the designated transfer date if such regulations have not been issued by that date, see section 1400(c) of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 1601 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section 708, formerly §707, of title VII of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1525, renumbered and amended by Pub. L. 94-239, §§7, 8, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 255, provided that: "This title [enacting this subchapter and provisions set out as notes under section 1691 of this title] takes effect upon the expiration of one year after the date of its enactment [Oct. 28, 1974]. The amendments made by the Equal Credit Opportunity Act Amendments of 1976 [enacting section 1691f of this title, amending this section and sections 1691b, 1691c, 1691d, and 1691e of this title, repealing section 1609 of this title, enacting provisions set out as notes under this section, and repealing provisions set out as a note under this section] shall take effect on the date of enactment thereof [Mar. 23, 1976] and shall apply to any violation occurring on or after such date, except that the amendments made to section 701 of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act [this section] shall take effect 12 months after the date of enactment [Mar. 23, 1976]."

SHORT TITLE

This subchapter known as the "Equal Credit Opportunity Act", see Short Title note set out under section 1601 of this title.

CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §502, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1521, provided that: "The Congress finds that there is a need to insure that the various financial institutions and other firms engaged in the extensions of credit exercise their responsibility to make credit available with fairness, impartiality, and without discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status. Economic stabilization would be enhanced and competition among the various financial institutions and other firms engaged in the extension of credit would be strengthened by an absence of discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status, as well as by the informed use of credit which Congress has heretofore sought to promote. It is the purpose of this Act [see Short Title note set out under section 1601 of this title] to require that financial institutions and other firms engaged in the extension of credit make that credit equally available to all credit-worthy customers without regard to sex or marital status."

§ 1691a. Definitions; rules of construction

(a) The definitions and rules of construction set forth in this section are applicable for the purposes of this subchapter.

(b) The term "applicant" means any person who applies to a creditor directly for an extension, renewal, or continuation of credit, or applies to a creditor indirectly by use of an existing credit plan for an amount exceeding a previously established credit limit.

(c) The term "Bureau" means the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

(d) The term "credit" means the right granted by a creditor to a debtor to defer payment of

debt or to incur debts and defer its payment or to purchase property or services and defer payment therefor.

(e) The term “creditor” means any person who regularly extends, renews, or continues credit; any person who regularly arranges for the extension, renewal, or continuation of credit; or any assignee of an original creditor who participates in the decision to extend, renew, or continue credit.

(f) The term “person” means a natural person, a corporation, government or governmental subdivision or agency, trust, estate, partnership, cooperative, or association.

(g) Any reference to any requirement imposed under this subchapter or any provision thereof includes reference to the regulations of the Bureau under this subchapter or the provision thereof in question.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §702, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1522; amended Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(1), (2), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(2), added subsec. (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows: “The term ‘Board’ refers to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.”

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(1), substituted “Bureau” for “Board”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

§ 1691b. Promulgation of regulations by the Bureau

(a) In general

The Bureau shall prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. These regulations may contain but are not limited to such classifications, differentiation, or other provision, and may provide for such adjustments and exceptions for any class of transactions, as in the judgment of the Bureau are necessary or proper to effectuate the purposes of this subchapter, to prevent circumvention or evasion thereof, or to facilitate or substantiate compliance therewith.

(b) Exempt transactions

Such regulations may exempt from the provisions of this subchapter any class of transactions that are not primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, or business or commercial loans made available by a financial institution, except that a particular type within a class of such transactions may be exempted if the Bureau determines, after making an express finding that the application of this subchapter or of any provision of this subchapter of such transaction would not contribute substantially to effecting the purposes of this subchapter.

(c) Limitation on exemptions

An exemption granted pursuant to subsection (b) shall be for no longer than five years and shall be extended only if the Bureau makes a subsequent determination, in the manner de-

scribed by such paragraph,¹ that such exemption remains appropriate.

(d) Maintenance of records

Pursuant to Bureau regulations, entities making business or commercial loans shall maintain such records or other data relating to such loans as may be necessary to evidence compliance with this subsection² or enforce any action pursuant to the authority of this chapter. In no event shall such records or data be maintained for a period of less than one year. The Bureau shall promulgate regulations to implement this paragraph³ in the manner prescribed by chapter 5 of title 5.

(e) Notice of denial of loan

The Bureau shall provide in regulations that an applicant for a business or commercial loan shall be provided a written notice of such applicant’s right to receive a written statement of the reasons for the denial of such loan.

(f) Board authority

Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Board shall prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of this subchapter with respect to a person described in section 5519(a) of title 12. These regulations may contain but are not limited to such classifications, differentiation, or other provision, and may provide for such adjustments and exceptions for any class of transactions, as in the judgment of the Board are necessary or proper to effectuate the purposes of this subchapter, to prevent circumvention or evasion thereof, or to facilitate or substantiate compliance therewith.

(g) Deference

Notwithstanding any power granted to any Federal agency under this subchapter, the deference that a court affords to a Federal agency with respect to a determination made by such agency relating to the meaning or interpretation of any provision of this subchapter that is subject to the jurisdiction of such agency shall be applied as if that agency were the only agency authorized to apply, enforce, interpret, or administer the provisions of this subchapter⁴

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §703, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1522; amended Pub. L. 94-239, §3(a), Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 252; Pub. L. 100-533, title III, §301, Oct. 25, 1988, 102 Stat. 2692; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(1), (3), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(3)(A), substituted “Promulgation of regulations by the Bureau” for “Regulations” in section catchline.

Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(1), substituted “Bureau” for “Board” wherever appearing.

Subsecs. (a) to (e). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(3)(B)–(E), in subsec. (a), struck out “(a)” designation before “(1)”, redesignated subsec. (a) pars. (1) to (5) as subsecs. (a) to (e), respectively, in subsec. (c) substituted “subsection (b)” for “paragraph (2)”, and struck out former subsec. (b), which related to establishment of a Consumer Advisory Council to advise and consult with the Board.

¹ So in original. Probably should be “subsection.”

² So in original.

³ So in original. Probably should be “subsection.”

⁴ So in original. Probably should be followed by a period.

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(3)(F), added subsecs. (f) and (g).

1988—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 100-533 amended subsec. (a) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (a) read as follows: “The Board shall prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. These regulations may contain but are not limited to such classifications, differentiation, or other provision, and may provide for such adjustments and exceptions for any class of transactions, as in the judgment of the Board are necessary or proper to effectuate the purposes of this subchapter, to prevent circumvention or evasion thereof, or to facilitate or substantiate compliance therewith. In particular, such regulations may exempt from one or more of the provisions of this subchapter any class of transactions not primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, if the Board makes an express finding that the application of such provision or provisions would not contribute substantially to carrying out the purposes of this subchapter. Such regulations shall be prescribed as soon as possible after the date of enactment of this Act, but in no event later than the effective date of this Act.”

1976—Pub. L. 94-239 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted provisions exempting from regulations of this subchapter any class of transactions not primarily for personal, family, or household purposes to be determined by the Board, and added subsec. (b).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-239 effective Mar. 23, 1976, see section 708 of Pub. L. 90-321, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1691 of this title.

§ 1691c. Administrative enforcement

(a) Enforcing agencies

Subject to subtitle B of the Consumer Protection Financial Protection Act of 2010¹ with² the requirements imposed under this subchapter shall be enforced under:

(1) section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act [12 U.S.C. 1818], by the appropriate Federal banking agency, as defined in section 3(q) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813(q)), with respect to—

(A) national banks, Federal savings associations, and Federal branches and Federal agencies of foreign banks;

(B) member banks of the Federal Reserve System (other than national banks), branches and agencies of foreign banks (other than Federal branches, Federal agencies, and insured State branches of foreign banks), commercial lending companies owned or controlled by foreign banks, and organizations operating under section 25 or 25A of the Federal Reserve Act [12 U.S.C. 601 et seq., 611 et seq.]; and

(C) banks and State savings associations insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (other than members of the Federal Reserve System), and insured State branches of foreign banks;

(2) The Federal Credit Union Act [12 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.], by the Administrator of the Na-

tional Credit Union Administration with respect to any Federal Credit Union.

(3) Subtitle IV of title 49, by the Secretary of Transportation, with respect to all carriers subject to the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board.

(4) Part A of subtitle VII of title 49, by the Secretary of Transportation with respect to any air carrier or foreign air carrier subject to that part.

(5) The Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 [7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.] (except as provided in section 406 of that Act [7 U.S.C. 226, 227]), by the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to any activities subject to that Act.

(6) The Farm Credit Act of 1971 [12 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.], by the Farm Credit Administration with respect to any Federal land bank, Federal land bank association, Federal intermediate credit bank, and production credit association;

(7) The Securities Exchange Act of 1934 [15 U.S.C. 78a et seq.], by the Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to brokers and dealers;

(8) The Small Business Investment Act of 1958 [15 U.S.C. 661 et seq.], by the Small Business Administration, with respect to small business investment companies; and

(9) Subtitle E of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 [12 U.S.C. 5561 et seq.], by the Bureau, with respect to any person subject to this subchapter.

The terms used in paragraph (1) that are not defined in this subchapter or otherwise defined in section 3(s) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813(s)) shall have the meaning given to them in section 1(b) of the International Banking Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3101).

(b) Violations of subchapter deemed violations of preexisting statutory requirements; additional agency powers

For the purpose of the exercise by any agency referred to in subsection (a) of its powers under any Act referred to in that subsection, a violation of any requirement imposed under this subchapter shall be deemed to be a violation of a requirement imposed under that Act. In addition to its powers under any provision of law specifically referred to in subsection (a), each of the agencies referred to in that subsection may exercise for the purpose of enforcing compliance with any requirement imposed under this subchapter, any other authority conferred on it by law. The exercise of the authorities of any of the agencies referred to in subsection (a) for the purpose of enforcing compliance with any requirement imposed under this subchapter shall in no way preclude the exercise of such authorities for the purpose of enforcing compliance with any other provision of law not relating to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction.

(c) Overall enforcement authority of Federal Trade Commission

Except to the extent that enforcement of the requirements imposed under this subchapter is specifically committed to some other Govern-

¹ So in original. Probably should be “Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010”.

² So in original. Probably should be “, compliance with”.

ment agency under any of paragraphs (1) through (8) of subsection (a), and subject to subtitle B of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, the Federal Trade Commission shall be authorized to enforce such requirements. For the purpose of the exercise by the Federal Trade Commission of its functions and powers under the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.), a violation of any requirement imposed under this subchapter³ shall be deemed a violation of a requirement imposed under that Act. All of the functions and powers of the Federal Trade Commission under the Federal Trade Commission Act are available to the Federal Trade Commission to enforce compliance by any person with the requirements imposed under this subchapter, irrespective of whether that person is engaged in commerce or meets any other jurisdictional tests under the Federal Trade Commission Act, including the power to enforce any rule prescribed by the Bureau under this subchapter in the same manner as if the violation had been a violation of a Federal Trade Commission trade regulation rule.

(d) Rules and regulations by enforcing agencies

The authority of the Bureau to issue regulations under this subchapter does not impair the authority of any other agency designated in this section to make rules respecting its own procedures in enforcing compliance with requirements imposed under this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §704, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1522; amended Pub. L. 94-239, §4, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 253; Pub. L. 98-443, §9(n), Oct. 4, 1984, 98 Stat. 1708; Pub. L. 101-73, title VII, §744(m), Aug. 9, 1989, 103 Stat. 439; Pub. L. 102-242, title II, §212(d), Dec. 19, 1991, 105 Stat. 2300; Pub. L. 102-550, title XVI, §1604(a)(7), Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4082; Pub. L. 104-88, title III, §315, Dec. 29, 1995, 109 Stat. 948; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(4), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2084.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, referred to in subsections (a) and (c), is title X of Pub. L. 111-203, July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 1955. Subtitles B (§§1021-1029A) and E (§§1051-1058) of the Act are classified generally to parts B (§5511 et seq.) and E (§5561 et seq.), respectively, of subchapter V of chapter 53 of Title 12, Banks and Banking. For complete classification of subtitles B and E to the Code, see Tables.

Sections 25 and 25A of the Federal Reserve Act, referred to in subsection (a)(1)(B), are classified to subchapters I (§601 et seq.) and II (§611 et seq.), respectively, of chapter 6 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

The Federal Credit Union Act, referred to in subsection (a)(2), is act June 26, 1934, ch. 750, 48 Stat. 1216, which is classified generally to chapter 14 (§1751 et seq.) of Title 12. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 1751 of Title 12 and Tables.

The Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, referred to in subsection (a)(5), is act Aug. 15, 1921, ch. 64, 42 Stat. 159, which is classified to chapter 9 (§181 et seq.) of Title 7, Agriculture. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 181 of Title 7 and Tables.

The Farm Credit Act of 1971, referred to in subsection (a)(6), is Pub. L. 92-181, Dec. 10, 1971, 85 Stat. 583, which is classified generally to chapter 23 (§2001 et seq.) of Title 12, Banks and Banking. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 2001 of Title 12 and Tables.

The Securities Exchange Act of 1934, referred to in subsection (a)(7), is act June 6, 1934, ch. 404, 48 Stat. 881, which is classified principally to chapter 2B (§78a et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Codification note set out under section 78a of this title and Tables.

The Small Business Investment Act of 1958, referred to in subsection (a)(8), is Pub. L. 85-699, Aug. 21, 1958, 72 Stat. 689, which is classified principally to chapter 14B (§661 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 661 of this title and Tables.

The Federal Trade Commission Act, referred to in subsection (c), is act Sept. 26, 1914, ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§41 et seq.) of chapter 2 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 58 of this title and Tables.

This subchapter, referred to in subsection (c) before “shall be deemed”, probably should have been a reference to this title in the original, meaning title VII of Pub. L. 90-321 which is classified generally to this subchapter.

CODIFICATION

In subsection (a)(3), “Subtitle IV of title 49” substituted for “The Acts to regulate commerce” on authority of Pub. L. 95-473, §3(b), Oct. 17, 1978, 92 Stat. 1466, the first section of which enacted subtitle IV of Title 49, Transportation.

In subsection (a)(4), “Part A of subtitle VII of title 49” substituted for “The Federal Aviation Act of 1958 [49 App. U.S.C. 1301 et seq.]” and “that part” substituted for “that Act” on authority of Pub. L. 103-272, §6(b), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1378, the first section of which enacted subtitles II, III, and V to X of Title 49.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(4)(A)(i), substituted “Subject to subtitle B of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010” for “Compliance” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(4)(A)(ii), added par. (1) and struck out former par. (1) which read as follows: “section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, in the case of—

“(A) national banks, and Federal branches and Federal agencies of foreign banks, by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency;

“(B) member banks of the Federal Reserve System (other than national banks), branches and agencies of foreign banks (other than Federal branches, Federal agencies, and insured State branches of foreign banks), commercial lending companies owned or controlled by foreign banks, and organizations operating under section 25 or 25(a) of the Federal Reserve Act, by the Board; and

“(C) banks insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (other than members of the Federal Reserve System) and insured State branches of foreign banks, by the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation;”.

Subsec. (a)(2) to (9). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(4)(A)(ii)-(vi), added par. (9), redesignated former pars. (3) to (9) as (2) to (8), respectively, and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “Section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, by the Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision, in the case of a savings association the deposits of which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(4)(B), added subsec. (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows: “Except to the extent that enforcement of the requirements imposed under this subchapter is specifically committed to some other Government agency under subsection (a) of this section, the Federal Trade Commission shall enforce such requirements. For the purpose of the exercise by the Federal Trade Commission of its functions and powers under the Federal

³ See References in Text note below.

Trade Commission Act, a violation of any requirement imposed under this subchapter shall be deemed a violation of a requirement imposed under that Act. All of the functions and powers of the Federal Trade Commission under the Federal Trade Commission Act are available to the Commission to enforce compliance by any person with the requirements imposed under this subchapter, irrespective of whether that person is engaged in commerce or meets any other jurisdictional tests in the Federal Trade Commission Act, including the power to enforce any Federal Reserve Board regulation promulgated under this subchapter in the same manner as if the violation had been a violation of a Federal Trade Commission trade regulation rule."

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(4)(C), substituted "Bureau" for "Board".

1995—Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 104-88 substituted "Secretary of Transportation, with respect to all carriers subject to the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board" for "Interstate Commerce Commission with respect to any common carrier subject to those Acts".

1992—Subsec. (a)(1)(C). Pub. L. 102-550 substituted semicolon for period at end.

1991—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 102-242, §212(d)(2), inserted at end "The terms used in paragraph (1) that are not defined in this subchapter or otherwise defined in section 3(s) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813(s)) shall have the meaning given to them in section 1(b) of the International Banking Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3101)."

Pub. L. 102-242, §212(d)(1), added par. (1) and struck out former par. (1) which read as follows: "Section 8 of Federal Deposit Insurance Act, in the case of—

"(A) national banks, by the Comptroller of the Currency,

"(B) member banks of the Federal Reserve System (other than national banks), by the Federal Reserve Board,

"(C) banks the deposits or accounts of which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (other than members of the Federal Reserve System), by the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation."

1989—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 101-73 amended par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (2) read as follows: "Section 5(d) of the Home Owners' Loan Act of 1933, section 407 of the National Housing Act, and sections 6(i) and 17 of the Federal Home Loan Bank Act, by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (acting directly or through the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation), in the case of any institution subject to any of those provisions."

1984—Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 98-443 substituted "Secretary of Transportation" for "Civil Aeronautics Board".

1976—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 94-239 inserted provisions giving the Federal Trade Commission power to enforce any regulation of the Federal Reserve Board promulgated under this subchapter.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1995 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-88 effective Jan. 1, 1996, see section 2 of Pub. L. 104-88, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1301 of Title 49, Transportation.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1992 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 102-550 effective as if included in the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Improvement Act of 1991, Pub. L. 102-242, as of Dec. 19, 1991, see section 1609(a) of Pub. L. 102-550, set out as a note under section 191 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 98-443 effective Jan. 1, 1985, see section 9(v) of Pub. L. 98-443, set out as a note under section 5314 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-239 effective Mar. 23, 1976, see section 708 of Pub. L. 90-321, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1691 of this title.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Functions vested in Administrator of National Credit Union Administration transferred and vested in National Credit Union Administration Board pursuant to section 1752a of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

§ 1691c-1. Incentives for self-testing and self-correction

(a) Privileged information

(1) Conditions for privilege

A report or result of a self-test (as that term is defined by regulations of the Bureau) shall be considered to be privileged under paragraph (2) if a creditor—

(A) conducts, or authorizes an independent third party to conduct, a self-test of any aspect of a credit transaction by a creditor, in order to determine the level or effectiveness of compliance with this subchapter by the creditor; and

(B) has identified any possible violation of this subchapter by the creditor and has taken, or is taking, appropriate corrective action to address any such possible violation.

(2) Privileged self-test

If a creditor meets the conditions specified in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) with respect to a self-test described in that paragraph, any report or results of that self-test—

(A) shall be privileged; and

(B) may not be obtained or used by any applicant, department, or agency in any—

(i) proceeding or civil action in which one or more violations of this subchapter are alleged; or

(ii) examination or investigation relating to compliance with this subchapter.

(b) Results of self-testing

(1) In general

No provision of this section may be construed to prevent an applicant, department, or agency from obtaining or using a report or results of any self-test in any proceeding or civil action in which a violation of this subchapter is alleged, or in any examination or investigation of compliance with this subchapter if—

(A) the creditor or any person with lawful access to the report or results—

(i) voluntarily releases or discloses all, or any part of, the report or results to the applicant, department, or agency, or to the general public; or

(ii) refers to or describes the report or results as a defense to charges of violations of this subchapter against the creditor to whom the self-test relates; or

(B) the report or results are sought in conjunction with an adjudication or admission of a violation of this subchapter for the sole purpose of determining an appropriate penalty or remedy.

(2) Disclosure for determination of penalty or remedy

Any report or results of a self-test that are disclosed for the purpose specified in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) shall be used only for the particular proceeding in which the adjudication or admission referred to in paragraph (1)(B) is made; and

(B) may not be used in any other action or proceeding.

(c) Adjudication

An applicant, department, or agency that challenges a privilege asserted under this section may seek a determination of the existence and application of that privilege in—

(1) a court of competent jurisdiction; or

(2) an administrative law proceeding with appropriate jurisdiction.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, § 704A, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, § 2302(a)(1), Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-420; amended Pub. L. 111-203, title X, § 1085(1), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 111-203 substituted “Bureau” for “Board” in introductory provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, § 2302(c), Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-423, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the privilege provided for in section 704A of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act [15 U.S.C. 1691c-1] or section 814A of the Fair Housing Act [42 U.S.C. 3614-1] (as those sections are added by this section) shall apply to a self-test (as that term is defined pursuant to the regulations prescribed under subsection (a)(2) [set out below] or (b)(2) of this section [42 U.S.C. 3614-1 note], as appropriate) conducted before, on, or after the effective date of the regulations prescribed under subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2), as appropriate.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—The privilege referred to in paragraph (1) does not apply to such a self-test conducted before the effective date of the regulations prescribed under subsection (a) or (b), as appropriate, if—

“(A) before that effective date, a complaint against the creditor or person engaged in residential real estate related lending activities (as the case may be) was—

“(i) formally filed in any court of competent jurisdiction; or

“(ii) the subject of an ongoing administrative law proceeding;

“(B) in the case of section 704A of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the creditor has waived the privilege pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(A)(i) of that section; or

“(C) in the case of section 814A of the Fair Housing Act, the person engaged in residential real estate related lending activities has waived the privilege pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(A)(i) of that section.”

REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, § 2302(a)(2), Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-421, provided that:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Sept. 30, 1996], in consultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the agencies referred to in section 704 of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act [15 U.S.C. 1691c], and after providing notice and an opportunity for public comment, the Board shall prescribe final regulations to implement section 704A of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act [15 U.S.C. 1691c-1], as added by this section.

“(B) SELF-TEST.—

“(i) DEFINITION.—The regulations prescribed under subparagraph (A) shall include a definition of the term ‘self-test’ for purposes of section 704A of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, as added by this section.

“(ii) REQUIREMENT FOR SELF-TEST.—The regulations prescribed under subparagraph (A) shall specify that a self-test shall be sufficiently extensive to constitute a determination of the level and effectiveness of compliance by a creditor with the Equal Credit Opportunity Act [15 U.S.C. 1691 et seq.].

“(iii) SUBSTANTIAL SIMILARITY TO CERTAIN FAIR HOUSING ACT REGULATIONS.—The regulations prescribed under subparagraph (A) shall be substantially similar to the regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to carry out section 814A(d) of the Fair Housing Act [42 U.S.C. 3614-1(d)], as added by this section.”

§ 1691c-2. Small business loan data collection

(a) Purpose

The purpose of this section is to facilitate enforcement of fair lending laws and enable communities, governmental entities, and creditors to identify business and community development needs and opportunities of women-owned, minority-owned, and small businesses.

(b) Information gathering

Subject to the requirements of this section, in the case of any application to a financial institution for credit for women-owned, minority-owned, or small business, the financial institution shall—

(1) inquire whether the business is a women-owned, minority-owned, or small business, without regard to whether such application is received in person, by mail, by telephone, by electronic mail or other form of electronic transmission, or by any other means, and whether or not such application is in response to a solicitation by the financial institution; and

(2) maintain a record of the responses to such inquiry, separate from the application and accompanying information.

(c) Right to refuse

Any applicant for credit may refuse to provide any information requested pursuant to subsection (b) in connection with any application for credit.

(d) No access by underwriters

(1) Limitation

Where feasible, no loan underwriter or other officer or employee of a financial institution, or any affiliate of a financial institution, involved in making any determination concerning an application for credit shall have access to any information provided by the applicant pursuant to a request under subsection (b) in connection with such application.

(2) Limited access

If a financial institution determines that a loan underwriter or other officer or employee

of a financial institution, or any affiliate of a financial institution, involved in making any determination concerning an application for credit should have access to any information provided by the applicant pursuant to a request under subsection (b), the financial institution shall provide notice to the applicant of the access of the underwriter to such information, along with notice that the financial institution may not discriminate on the basis of such information.

(e) Form and manner of information

(1) In general

Each financial institution shall compile and maintain, in accordance with regulations of the Bureau, a record of the information provided by any loan applicant pursuant to a request under subsection (b).

(2) Itemization

Information compiled and maintained under paragraph (1) shall be itemized in order to clearly and conspicuously disclose—

- (A) the number of the application and the date on which the application was received;
- (B) the type and purpose of the loan or other credit being applied for;
- (C) the amount of the credit or credit limit applied for, and the amount of the credit transaction or the credit limit approved for such applicant;
- (D) the type of action taken with respect to such application, and the date of such action;
- (E) the census tract in which is located the principal place of business of the women-owned, minority-owned, or small business loan applicant;
- (F) the gross annual revenue of the business in the last fiscal year of the women-owned, minority-owned, or small business loan applicant preceding the date of the application;
- (G) the race, sex, and ethnicity of the principal owners of the business; and
- (H) any additional data that the Bureau determines would aid in fulfilling the purposes of this section.

(3) No personally identifiable information

In compiling and maintaining any record of information under this section, a financial institution may not include in such record the name, specific address (other than the census tract required under paragraph (1)(E)),¹ telephone number, electronic mail address, or any other personally identifiable information concerning any individual who is, or is connected with, the women-owned, minority-owned, or small business loan applicant.

(4) Discretion to delete or modify publicly available data

The Bureau may, at its discretion, delete or modify data collected under this section which is or will be available to the public, if the Bureau determines that the deletion or modification of the data would advance a privacy interest.

(f) Availability of information

(1) Submission to Bureau

The data required to be compiled and maintained under this section by any financial institution shall be submitted annually to the Bureau.

(2) Availability of information

Information compiled and maintained under this section shall be—

- (A) retained for not less than 3 years after the date of preparation;
- (B) made available to any member of the public, upon request, in the form required under regulations prescribed by the Bureau;
- (C) annually made available to the public generally by the Bureau, in such form and in such manner as is determined by the Bureau, by regulation.

(3) Compilation of aggregate data

The Bureau may, at its discretion—

- (A) compile and aggregate data collected under this section for its own use; and
- (B) make public such compilations of aggregate data.

(g) Bureau action

(1) In general

The Bureau shall prescribe such rules and issue such guidance as may be necessary to carry out, enforce, and compile data pursuant to this section.

(2) Exceptions

The Bureau, by rule or order, may adopt exceptions to any requirement of this section and may, conditionally or unconditionally, exempt any financial institution or class of financial institutions from the requirements of this section, as the Bureau deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.

(3) Guidance

The Bureau shall issue guidance designed to facilitate compliance with the requirements of this section, including assisting financial institutions in working with applicants to determine whether the applicants are women-owned, minority-owned, or small businesses for purposes of this section.

(h) Definitions

For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Financial institution

The term “financial institution” means any partnership, company, corporation, association (incorporated or unincorporated), trust, estate, cooperative organization, or other entity that engages in any financial activity.

(2) Small business

The term “small business” has the same meaning as the term “small business concern” in section 632 of this title.

(3) Small business loan

The term “small business loan” means a loan made to a small business.

(4) Minority

The term “minority” has the same meaning as in section 1204(c)(3) of the Financial Institu-

¹ So in original. Probably should be “(2)(E)”,.

tions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989.

(5) Minority-owned business

The term “minority-owned business” means a business—

(A) more than 50 percent of the ownership or control of which is held by 1 or more minority individuals; and

(B) more than 50 percent of the net profit or loss of which accrues to 1 or more minority individuals.

(6) Women-owned business

The term “women-owned business” means a business—

(A) more than 50 percent of the ownership or control of which is held by 1 or more women; and

(B) more than 50 percent of the net profit or loss of which accrues to 1 or more women.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §704B, as added Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1071(a), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2056.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 1204(c)(3) of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, referred to in subsec. (h)(4), is section 1204(c)(3) of Pub. L. 101-73, which is set out as a note under section 1811 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1071(d) of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as an Effective Date of 2010 Amendment note under section 1691 of this title.

§ 1691d. Applicability of other laws

(a) Requests for signature of husband and wife for creation of valid lien, etc.

A request for the signature of both parties to a marriage for the purpose of creating a valid lien, passing clear title, waiving inchoate rights to property, or assigning earnings, shall not constitute discrimination under this subchapter: *Provided, however,* That this provision shall not be construed to permit a creditor to take sex or marital status into account in connection with the evaluation of creditworthiness of any applicant.

(b) State property laws affecting creditworthiness

Consideration or application of State property laws directly or indirectly affecting creditworthiness shall not constitute discrimination for purposes of this subchapter.

(c) State laws prohibiting separate extension of consumer credit to husband and wife

Any provision of State law which prohibits the separate extension of consumer credit to each party to a marriage shall not apply in any case where each party to a marriage voluntarily applies for separate credit from the same creditor: *Provided,* That in any case where such a State law is so preempted, each party to the marriage shall be solely responsible for the debt so contracted.

(d) Combining credit accounts of husband and wife with same creditor to determine permissible finance charges or loan ceilings under Federal or State laws

When each party to a marriage separately and voluntarily applies for and obtains separate credit accounts with the same creditor, those accounts shall not be aggregated or otherwise combined for purposes of determining permissible finance charges or permissible loan ceilings under the laws of any State or of the United States.

(e) Election of remedies under subchapter or State law; nature of relief determining applicability

Where the same act or omission constitutes a violation of this subchapter and of applicable State law, a person aggrieved by such conduct may bring a legal action to recover monetary damages either under this subchapter or under such State law, but not both. This election of remedies shall not apply to court actions in which the relief sought does not include monetary damages or to administrative actions.

(f) Compliance with inconsistent State laws; determination of inconsistency

This subchapter does not annul, alter, or affect, or exempt any person subject to the provisions of this subchapter from complying with, the laws of any State with respect to credit discrimination, except to the extent that those laws are inconsistent with any provision of this subchapter, and then only to the extent of the inconsistency. The Bureau is authorized to determine whether such inconsistencies exist. The Bureau may not determine that any State law is inconsistent with any provision of this subchapter if the Bureau determines that such law gives greater protection to the applicant.

(g) Exemption by regulation of credit transactions covered by State law; failure to comply with State law

The Bureau shall by regulation exempt from the requirements of sections 1691 and 1691a of this title any class of credit transactions within any State if it determines that under the law of that State that class of transactions is subject to requirements substantially similar to those imposed under this subchapter or that such law gives greater protection to the applicant, and that there is adequate provision for enforcement. Failure to comply with any requirement of such State law in any transaction so exempted shall constitute a violation of this subchapter for the purposes of section 1691e of this title.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §705, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1523; amended Pub. L. 94-239, §5, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 253; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(1), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 111-203 substituted “Bureau” for “Board” wherever appearing.

1976—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 94-239, §5(1), substituted provisions requiring an election of remedies in legal actions involving the recovery of monetary damages, for provisions specifying a general election of remedies.

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 94-239, §5(2), added subsecs. (f) and (g).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-239 effective Mar. 23, 1976, see section 708 of Pub. L. 90-321, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1691 of this title.

§ 1691e. Civil liability**(a) Individual or class action for actual damages**

Any creditor who fails to comply with any requirement imposed under this subchapter shall be liable to the aggrieved applicant for any actual damages sustained by such applicant acting either in an individual capacity or as a member of a class.

(b) Recovery of punitive damages in individual and class action for actual damages; exemptions; maximum amount of punitive damages in individual actions; limitation on total recovery in class actions; factors determining amount of award

Any creditor, other than a government or governmental subdivision or agency, who fails to comply with any requirement imposed under this subchapter shall be liable to the aggrieved applicant for punitive damages in an amount not greater than \$10,000, in addition to any actual damages provided in subsection (a), except that in the case of a class action the total recovery under this subsection shall not exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or 1 per centum of the net worth of the creditor. In determining the amount of such damages in any action, the court shall consider, among other relevant factors, the amount of any actual damages awarded, the frequency and persistence of failures of compliance by the creditor, the resources of the creditor, the number of persons adversely affected, and the extent to which the creditor's failure of compliance was intentional.

(c) Action for equitable and declaratory relief

Upon application by an aggrieved applicant, the appropriate United States district court or any other court of competent jurisdiction may grant such equitable and declaratory relief as is necessary to enforce the requirements imposed under this subchapter.

(d) Recovery of costs and attorney fees

In the case of any successful action under subsection (a), (b), or (c), the costs of the action, together with a reasonable attorney's fee as determined by the court, shall be added to any damages awarded by the court under such subsection.

(e) Good faith compliance with rule, regulation, or interpretation of Bureau or interpretation or approval by an official or employee of Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection duly authorized by Bureau

No provision of this subchapter imposing liability shall apply to any act done or omitted in good faith in conformity with any official rule, regulation, or interpretation thereof by the Bureau or in conformity with any interpretation or

approval by an official or employee of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection duly authorized by the Bureau to issue such interpretations or approvals under such procedures as the Bureau may prescribe therefor, notwithstanding that after such act or omission has occurred, such rule, regulation, interpretation, or approval is amended, rescinded, or determined by judicial or other authority to be invalid for any reason.

(f) Jurisdiction of courts; time for maintenance of action; exceptions

Any action under this section may be brought in the appropriate United States district court without regard to the amount in controversy, or in any other court of competent jurisdiction. No such action shall be brought later than 5 years after the date of the occurrence of the violation, except that—

(1) whenever any agency having responsibility for administrative enforcement under section 1691c of this title commences an enforcement proceeding within 5 years after the date of the occurrence of the violation,

(2) whenever the Attorney General commences a civil action under this section within 5 years after the date of the occurrence of the violation,

then any applicant who has been a victim of the discrimination which is the subject of such proceeding or civil action may bring an action under this section not later than one year after the commencement of that proceeding or action.

(g) Request by responsible enforcement agency to Attorney General for civil action

The agencies having responsibility for administrative enforcement under section 1691c of this title, if unable to obtain compliance with section 1691 of this title, are authorized to refer the matter to the Attorney General with a recommendation that an appropriate civil action be instituted. Each agency referred to in paragraphs (1), (2), and (9) of section 1691c(a) of this title shall refer the matter to the Attorney General whenever the agency has reason to believe that 1 or more creditors has engaged in a pattern or practice of discouraging or denying applications for credit in violation of section 1691(a) of this title. Each such agency may refer the matter to the Attorney General whenever the agency has reason to believe that 1 or more creditors has violated section 1691(a) of this title.

(h) Authority for Attorney General to bring civil action; jurisdiction

When a matter is referred to the Attorney General pursuant to subsection (g), or whenever he has reason to believe that one or more creditors are engaged in a pattern or practice in violation of this subchapter, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court for such relief as may be appropriate, including actual and punitive damages and injunctive relief.

(i) Recovery under both subchapter and fair housing enforcement provisions prohibited for violation based on same transaction

No person aggrieved by a violation of this subchapter and by a violation of section 3605 of title

42 shall recover under this subchapter and section 3612¹ of title 42, if such violation is based on the same transaction.

(j) Discovery of creditor's granting standards

Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to prohibit the discovery of a creditor's credit granting standards under appropriate discovery procedures in the court or agency in which an action or proceeding is brought.

(k) Notice to HUD of violations

Whenever an agency referred to in paragraph (1), (2), or (3)¹ of section 1691c(a) of this title—

(1) has reason to believe, as a result of receiving a consumer complaint, conducting a consumer compliance examination, or otherwise, that a violation of this subchapter has occurred;

(2) has reason to believe that the alleged violation would be a violation of the Fair Housing Act [42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.]; and

(3) does not refer the matter to the Attorney General pursuant to subsection (g),

the agency shall notify the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development of the violation, and shall notify the applicant that the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development has been notified of the alleged violation and that remedies for the violation may be available under the Fair Housing Act.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §706, as added Pub. L. 93-495, title V, §503, Oct. 28, 1974, 88 Stat. 1524; amended Pub. L. 94-239, §6, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 253; Pub. L. 102-242, title II, §223(a)-(c), Dec. 19, 1991, 105 Stat. 2306; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(1), (5)-(7), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083, 2085.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 3612 of title 42, referred to in subsec. (i), which related to enforcement of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) by private persons, was repealed by Pub. L. 100-430, §8(2), Sept. 13, 1988, 102 Stat. 1625. See section 3613 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare.

Paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of section 1691c(a) of this title, referred to in subsec. (k), probably means par. (1), (2), or (3) of section 1691c(a) of this title prior to repeal of pars. (1) and (2), enactment of new pars. (1) and (9), and redesignation of par. (3) as (2) by Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(4)(A)(ii)-(vi), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2084.

The Fair Housing Act, referred to in subsec. (k), is title VIII of Pub. L. 90-284, Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 81, which is classified principally to subchapter I (§3601 et seq.) of chapter 45 of Title 42. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 3601 of Title 42 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(5)(B), substituted “Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection” for “Federal Reserve System” in text.

Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(5)(A), which directed amendment of “subsection heading” by substituting “Bureau” for “Board” wherever appearing and “Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection” for “Federal Reserve System”, was executed by making the substitutions in heading that had been supplied editorially, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(1), substituted “Bureau” for “Board” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(7), substituted “5 years after” for “two years from” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 111-203, §1085(6), substituted “(9)” for “(3)”.

1991—Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 102-242, §223(a), inserted at end “Each agency referred to in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 1691c(a) of this title shall refer the matter to the Attorney General whenever the agency has reason to believe that 1 or more creditors has engaged in a pattern or practice of discouraging or denying applications for credit in violation of section 1691(a) of this title. Each such agency may refer the matter to the Attorney General whenever the agency has reason to believe that 1 or more creditors has violated section 1691(a) of this title.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 102-242, §223(b), inserted “actual and punitive damages and” after “be appropriate, including”.

Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 102-242, §223(c), added subsec. (k).

1976—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 94-239 substituted reference to member for reference to representative.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 94-239 inserted provisions exempting government or governmental subdivision or agency from requirements of this subchapter, incorporated provisions contained in former subsec. (c) relating to recovery in class actions and, as incorporated, raised the total amount of recovery under a class action from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 94-239 redesignated subsec. (d) as (c) and specified United States district court or other court of competent jurisdiction as court in which to bring action, and substituted provisions authorizing such court to grant equitable and declaratory relief, for provisions authorizing civil actions for preventive relief. Provisions of former subsec. (c) were incorporated into present subsec. (b) and amended.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 94-239 redesignated subsec. (e) as (d) and made minor changes in phraseology. Former subsec. (d) redesignated (c) and amended.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 94-239 redesignated subsec. (f) as (e) and inserted reference to officially promulgated rule, regulation, or interpretation and provisions relating to approval and interpretations by an official or employee of the Federal Reserve System duly authorized by the Board. Former subsec. (e) redesignated (d) and amended.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 94-239 redesignated subsec. (g) as (f) and inserted provisions which substituted a two year limitation for one year limitation and provisions extending time in which to bring action under enumerated conditions. Former subsec. (f) redesignated (e) and amended.

Subsecs. (g) to (j). Pub. L. 94-239 added subsecs. (g) to (j). Former subsec. (g) redesignated (f) and amended.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-239 effective Mar. 23, 1976, see section 708 of Pub. L. 90-321, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1691 of this title.

§ 1691f. Annual reports to Congress; contents

Each year, the Bureau and the Attorney General shall, respectively, make reports to the Congress concerning the administration of their functions under this subchapter, including such recommendations as the Bureau and the Attorney General, respectively, deem necessary or appropriate. In addition, each report of the Bureau shall include its assessment of the extent to which compliance with the requirements of this subchapter is being achieved, and a summary of the enforcement actions taken by each of the agencies assigned administrative enforcement responsibilities under section 1691c of this title.

¹ See References in Text note below.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VII, §707, as added Pub. L. 94-239, § 7, Mar. 23, 1976, 90 Stat. 255; amended Pub. L. 96-221, title VI, §610(c), Mar. 31, 1980, 94 Stat. 174; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1085(1), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2083.)

AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-203 substituted “Bureau” for “Board” wherever appearing.

1980—Pub. L. 96-221 substituted “Each year” for “Not later than February 1 of each year after 1976”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 96-221 effective on expiration of two years and six months after Mar. 31, 1980, with all regulations, forms, and clauses required to be prescribed to be promulgated at least one year prior to such effective date, and allowing any creditor to comply with any amendments, in accordance with the regulations, forms, and clauses prescribed by the Board prior to such effective date, see section 625 of Pub. L. 96-221, set out as a note under section 1602 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Mar. 23, 1976, see section 708 of Pub. L. 90-321, set out as a note under section 1691 of this title.

SUBCHAPTER V—DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES

§ 1692. Congressional findings and declaration of purpose

(a) Abusive practices

There is abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors. Abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of personal bankruptcies, to marital instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy.

(b) Inadequacy of laws

Existing laws and procedures for redressing these injuries are inadequate to protect consumers.

(c) Available non-abusive collection methods

Means other than misrepresentation or other abusive debt collection practices are available for the effective collection of debts.

(d) Interstate commerce

Abusive debt collection practices are carried on to a substantial extent in interstate commerce and through means and instrumentalities of such commerce. Even where abusive debt collection practices are purely intrastate in character, they nevertheless directly affect interstate commerce.

(e) Purposes

It is the purpose of this subchapter to eliminate abusive debt collection practices by debt collectors, to insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged, and to promote consistent State action to protect consumers against debt collection abuses.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VIII, §802, as added Pub. L. 95-109, Sept. 20, 1977, 91 Stat. 874.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 90-321, title VIII, §819, formerly §818, as added by Pub. L. 95-109, Sept. 20, 1977, 91 Stat. 883, §818; renumbered §819, Pub. L. 109-351, title VIII, §801(a)(1), Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 2004, provided that: “This title [enacting this subchapter] takes effect upon the expiration of six months after the date of its enactment [Sept. 20, 1977], but section 809 [section 1692g of this title] shall apply only with respect to debts for which the initial attempt to collect occurs after such effective date.”

SHORT TITLE

This subchapter known as the “Fair Debt Collection Practices Act”, see Short Title note set out under section 1601 of this title.

§ 1692a. Definitions

As used in this subchapter—

(1) The term “Bureau” means the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

(2) The term “communication” means the conveying of information regarding a debt directly or indirectly to any person through any medium.

(3) The term “consumer” means any natural person obligated or allegedly obligated to pay any debt.

(4) The term “creditor” means any person who offers or extends credit creating a debt or to whom a debt is owed, but such term does not include any person to the extent that he receives an assignment or transfer of a debt in default solely for the purpose of facilitating collection of such debt for another.

(5) The term “debt” means any obligation or alleged obligation of a consumer to pay money arising out of a transaction in which the money, property, insurance, or services which are the subject of the transaction are primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, whether or not such obligation has been reduced to judgment.

(6) The term “debt collector” means any person who uses any instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails in any business the principal purpose of which is the collection of any debts, or who regularly collects or attempts to collect, directly or indirectly, debts owed or due or asserted to be owed or due another. Notwithstanding the exclusion provided by clause (F) of the last sentence of this paragraph, the term includes any creditor who, in the process of collecting his own debts, uses any name other than his own which would indicate that a third person is collecting or attempting to collect such debts. For the purpose of section 1692f(6) of this title, such term also includes any person who uses any instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails in any business the principal purpose of which is the enforcement of security interests. The term does not include—

(A) any officer or employee of a creditor while, in the name of the creditor, collecting debts for such creditor;

(B) any person while acting as a debt collector for another person, both of whom are related by common ownership or affiliated