

SMALL BUSINESS ACCESS TO CAPITAL AFTER A  
NATURAL DISASTER ACT

JANUARY 29, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State  
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. HENSARLING, from the Committee on Financial Services,  
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 4792]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Financial Services, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4792) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to expand access to capital for small businesses affected by hurricanes or other natural disasters, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

On January 18, 2018, Representative Nydia Velázquez introduced H.R. 4792, the “Small Business Access to Capital After a Natural Disaster Act,” which amends the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the Securities and Exchange Commission’s (SEC) Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation (Small Business Advocate) to identify any unique challenges to small businesses affected by hurricanes or natural disasters when assessing problems that the small businesses have with securing access to capital. This bill further requires that in its annual report the Small Business Advocate must include a summary of any unique issues encountered by small businesses affected by hurricanes or natural disasters.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

In the 114th Congress, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law, H.R. 3874, the SEC Small Business Advocate Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-284). This law created within the SEC the Office

for Small Business Capital Formation (OSBCF) and the Small Business Capital Formation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) within the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The OSBCF will be led by the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation, who will be appointed by and reports to the Commission, with the responsibility to, among other things:

- Help small businesses resolve problems with the SEC;
- Analyze the potential impact of proposed rules and regulations that are likely to have a significant effect on small businesses; and
- Reach out to small businesses to understand issues related to capital formation.

The Advisory Committee provides advice to the Commission on rules and policies related to capital formulation, securities trading, and reporting and governance requirements for emerging and smaller public companies.

Prior to the enactment of H.R. 3874, the responsibility to facilitate and promote capital formation resided within the SEC's Office of Small Business Policy (OSBP), which is housed within the SEC's Division of Corporation Finance. OSBP answers questions on disclosure and other issues relating to smaller public companies, including those classified as "smaller reporting companies," and on limited, private, and intrastate offerings of securities. OSBP also processes requests for waivers of disqualification arising under rule 262 of Regulation A and rule 505(b)(2)(iii) and rule 506(d)(2)(ii) of Regulation D. In addition, OSBP reaches out to smaller companies to facilitate capital formation. These efforts include coordinating the annual SEC Government-Business Forum on Small Business Capital Formation, which focuses on the current status of issues and programs related to small business capital formation.

Unfortunately, the OSBP is a functional office rather than an advocacy office. The OSBP does not advocate for changes to the securities laws for smaller public companies, small businesses seeking equity capital, or investors in those companies or businesses. The OSBP does not advance initiatives to make equity capital more readily available to smaller issuers. Rather than neglecting the needs of small businesses, a permanent office dedicated to small business capital formation within the SEC is a logical outcome of the JOBS Act since the SEC has taken little to no action to advance the many recommendations the agency has received from its annual Government-Business Forum on Small Business Capital Formation (Forum) to help small businesses and EGCs access the capital markets.

A major purpose of the Forum is to identify unnecessary impediments to small business capital formation and find ways to eliminate or reduce them. Each Forum develops recommendations for government and private action to improve the environment for small business capital formation. But the SEC rarely, if ever, acts on the recommendations made by the Forum's participants, which include small business executives, venture capitalists, government officials, trade association representatives, lawyers, accountants, academics and small business advocates. The law promotes capital formation and creates an office within the SEC to advocate for the job creators and entrepreneurs seeking equity capital as well as their investors. The office will then be able to leverage the rec-

ommendations the SEC has collected and prompt the SEC to act on those most likely to help small businesses and EGCs access the capital markets.

At a December 2, 2015, Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises hearing, Chris Mathieu, Chief Financial Officer of Horizon Technology Finance, who testified on behalf of the Small Business Investor Alliance (SBIA), stated that “the SEC Small Business Advocate Act strengthens the voice of small business at the SEC by making significant changes to the way the SEC hears from small business stakeholders; responds to stakeholder requests; and makes recommendations to Congress and the SEC to improve the ability of small business to access capital.” Mr. Mathieu further noted that “[s]maller business investors have a much lower threshold for pain and the SEC needs to understand the challenges of scale when creating policy.” At the same hearing, Brian Hahn, the chief financial officer of GlycoMimetics, testifying on behalf of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), stated that “[t]he Small Business Advocate would serve as a partner to the existing Investor Advocate, giving small businesses an independent voice at the SEC and helping the SEC to understand the impact of regulatory burdens on growing companies as it considers new compliance requirements.”

On September 13, 2017, SEC Chairman Jay Clayton along with Commissioners Michael Piwowar and Kara Stein issued a joint statement to announce the launch of a nationwide search for candidates for a new senior executive position at the SEC, the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation and specifically noted, “The Advocate will be a powerful voice for small businesses and small business investors, providing assistance, conducting outreach to better understand their concerns and recommending improvements to the regulatory environment.”

Even though the SEC has yet to appoint its first Small Business Advocate, the need to expand the Advocate’s area of focus is worthy of Congressional action. The specific goal of H.R. 4792 is to have the Small Business Advocate facilitate increased access to capital to small businesses affected by hurricanes or natural disasters so that communities affected by the devastation that accompanies such events can recover faster.

Recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Harvey in Texas, Hurricane Irma in Puerto Rico, and the wildfires in California, have wreaked havoc on individuals and communities across the country. Small businesses are not exempt from this devastation and can be especially vulnerable to natural disasters due to the costs of rebuilding or loss of revenue from people being displaced.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), nearly 40 percent of small businesses do not reopen their doors after a natural disaster. Additionally, a survey of 500 small businesses conducted by Nationwide in 2015 found that 75 percent of small businesses do not develop plans to prepare for disasters. Even more troubling is that only 18 percent of companies that have fewer than 50 employees have a disaster recovery plan.

One of the SEC’s core missions is to facilitate capital formation, and as the Commission rightly is refocusing on this duty, the new Office of the Small Business Advocate provides an important resource for identifying ways to improve access to capital for small

businesses. Specifically, the Small Business Advocate's responsibilities include: (1) helping small businesses resolve problems with the SEC; (2) analyzing the potential impact of proposed rules and regulations that are likely to have a significant effect on small businesses; and (3) reaching out to small businesses to understand issues related to capital formation. Further, the Small Business Advocate's annual report to Congress can be a helpful resource for Congress to consider how to improve capital formation.

H.R. 4792 reminds the Small Business Advocate that these responsibilities go beyond the consideration of issues that affect small businesses operating in the normal course and requires the Advocate to identify unique issues which inhibit access to capital formation that small businesses face in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Considering the essential role small businesses play to generate jobs and investment in their local communities, the SEC Small Business Advocate and the Advisory Committee identifying ways to improve capital formation in areas affected by natural disasters could benefit our whole country and the entire economy by encouraging investment in such areas after natural disasters, thereby jumpstarting those local economies as they recover amidst devastation and reducing the degree to which businesses otherwise may need to rely on more bureaucratic programs to survive or reopen.

#### HEARINGS

The Committee on Financial Services held a hearing examining matters relating to H.R. 4792 on November 3, 2017.

#### COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

The Committee on Financial Services met in open session on January 17, 2018, and January 18, 2018, and ordered H.R. 4792 to be reported favorably to the House without amendment by a recorded vote of 57 yeas to 0 nays (Record vote no. FC-150), a quorum being present.

#### COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the record votes on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto. The sole recorded vote was on a motion by Chairman Hensarling to report the bill favorably to the House without amendment. The motion was agreed to by a recorded vote of 57 yeas to 0 nays (Record vote no. FC-150), a quorum being present.

## Record vote no. FC-150

Representative	Yea	Nay	Present	Representative	Yea	Nay	Present
Mr. Hensarling .....	X			Ms. Maxine Waters (CA) .....	X		
Mr. McHenry .....				Mrs. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY) ..	X		
Mr. King .....				Ms. Velázquez .....	X		
Mr. Royce (CA) .....	X			Mr. Sherman .....	X		
Mr. Lucas .....	X			Mr. Meeks .....	X		
Mr. Pearce .....	X			Mr. Capuano .....	X		
Mr. Posey .....	X			Mr. Clay .....			
Mr. Luetkemeyer .....	X			Mr. Lynch .....	X		
Mr. Huizenga .....	X			Mr. David Scott (GA) .....	X		
Mr. Duffy .....	X			Mr. Al Green (TX) .....	X		
Mr. Stivers .....	X			Mr. Cleaver .....	X		
Mr. Hultgren .....	X			Ms. Moore .....	X		
Mr. Ross .....	X			Mr. Ellison .....	X		
Mr. Pittenger .....	X			Mr. Perlmutter .....	X		
Mrs. Wagner .....	X			Mr. Himes .....	X		
Mr. Barr .....	X			Mr. Foster .....	X		
Mr. Rothfus .....	X			Mr. Kildee .....	X		
Mr. Messer .....	X			Mr. Delaney .....	X		
Mr. Tipton .....	X			Ms. Sinema .....	X		
Mr. Williams .....	X			Mrs. Beatty .....	X		
Mr. Poliquin .....	X			Mr. Heck .....	X		
Mrs. Love .....	X			Mr. Vargas .....	X		
Mr. Hill .....	X			Mr. Gottheimer .....	X		
Mr. Emmer .....	X			Mr. Gonzalez (TX) .....	X		
Mr. Zeldin .....	X			Mr. Crist .....	X		
Mr. Trott .....	X			Mr. Kihuen .....	X		
Mr. Loudermilk .....	X						
Mr. Mooney (WV) .....	X						
Mr. MacArthur .....	X						
Mr. Davidson .....	X						
Mr. Budd .....	X						
Mr. Kustoff (TN) .....	X						
Ms. Tenney .....	X						
Mr. Hollingsworth .....	X						

## COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the findings and recommendations of the Committee based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

## PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that H.R. 4792 will expand access to capital for small businesses affected by natural disasters by requiring the SEC's Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation to identify any unique capital formation challenges to small businesses facing and recovering from hurricanes or other natural disasters.

## NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is the cost estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, January 26, 2018.*

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,  
*Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 4792, the Small Business Access to Capital After a Natural Disaster Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Stephen Rabent.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,  
*Director.*

Enclosure.

*H.R. 4792—Small Business Access to Capital After a Natural Disaster Act*

H.R. 4792 would expand the functions of the Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation within the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to include identifying problems that small businesses affected by hurricanes or other natural disas-

ters experience when trying to secure access to capital. The office would be required to summarize any issues identified in an existing annual report.

Using information from the SEC, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4792 would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2018–2022 period for the agency to broaden the scope of its current activities. Moreover, the SEC is authorized to collect fees sufficient to offset its annual appropriation; therefore, CBO estimates that the net effect on discretionary spending would be negligible, assuming appropriation actions consistent with that authority.

Enacting H.R. 4792 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4792 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

H.R. 4792 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

If the SEC increases fees to offset the costs associated with implementing the bill, H.R. 4792 would increase the cost of an existing mandate on private entities required to pay those assessments. CBO estimates that the incremental cost of the mandate would be small and would fall well below the annual threshold for private-sector mandates established in UMRA (\$156 million in 2017, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Stephen Rabent (for federal costs) and Rachel Austin (for mandates). The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

#### FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

This information is provided in accordance with section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995.

The Committee has determined that the bill does not contain Federal mandates on the private sector. The Committee has determined that the bill does not impose a Federal intergovernmental mandate on State, local, or tribal governments.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act were created by this legislation.

#### APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of the section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### EARMARK IDENTIFICATION

With respect to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has carefully reviewed the provisions of the bill and states that the provisions of the bill do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits within the meaning of the rule.

#### DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that no provision of the bill establishes or reauthorizes: (1) a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program; (2) a program included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139; or (3) a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Pub. L. No. 95–220, as amended by Pub. L. No. 98–169).

#### DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULEMAKING

Pursuant to section 3(i) of H. Res. 5, (115th Congress), the following statement is made concerning directed rulemakings: The Committee estimates that the bill requires no directed rulemakings within the meaning of such section.

#### SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

##### *Section 1. Short title*

This section cites H.R. 4792 as the “Small Business Access to Capital After a Natural Disaster Act”.

##### *Section 2. Access to capital for rural-area small businesses*

This section amends section 4 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the Small Business Advocate to identify problems that small businesses affected by hurricanes or other natural disasters have with securing access to capital and to summarize such issues in the Small Business Advocate’s annual report.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

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### **SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

#### TITLE I—REGULATION OF SECURITIES EXCHANGES

\* \* \* \* \*



## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SEC. 4. (a) There is hereby established a Securities and Exchange Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission") to be composed of five commissioners to be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Not more than three of such commissioners shall be members of the same political party, and in making appointments members of different political parties shall be appointed alternately as nearly as may be practicable. No commissioner shall engage in any other business, vocation, or employment than that of serving as commissioner, nor shall any commissioner participate, directly or indirectly, in any stock-market operations or transactions of a character subject to regulation by the Commission pursuant to this title. Each commissioner shall hold office for a term of five years and until his successor is appointed and has qualified, except that he shall not so continue to serve beyond the expiration of the next session of Congress subsequent to the expiration of said fixed term of office, and except (1) any commissioner appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of such term, and (2) the terms of office of the commissioners first taking office after the enactment of this title shall expire as designated by the President at the time of nomination, one at the end of one year, one at the end of two years, one at the end of three years, one at the end of four years, and one at the end of five years, after the date of the enactment of this title.

(b) APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION OF STAFF AND LEASING AUTHORITY.—

(1) APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION.—The Commission shall appoint and compensate officers, attorneys, economists, examiners, and other employees in accordance with section 4802 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) REPORTING OF INFORMATION.—In establishing and adjusting schedules of compensation and benefits for officers, attorneys, economists, examiners, and other employees of the Commission under applicable provisions of law, the Commission shall inform the heads of the agencies referred to under section 1206 of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 (12 U.S.C. 1833b) and Congress of such compensation and benefits and shall seek to maintain comparability with such agencies regarding compensation and benefits.

(3) LEASING AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commission is authorized to enter directly into leases for real property for office, meeting, storage, and such other space as is necessary to carry out its functions, and shall be exempt from any General Services Administration space management regulations or directives.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in accordance with regulations which the Commission shall prescribe to prevent conflicts of interest, the Commission may accept payment and reimbursement, in cash or in kind, from non-Federal agencies, organizations, and individuals for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by Commission members and employees

in attending meetings and conferences concerning the functions or activities of the Commission. Any payment or reimbursement accepted shall be credited to the appropriated funds of the Commission. The amount of travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses for members and employees paid or reimbursed under this subsection may exceed per diem amounts established in official travel regulations, but the Commission may include in its regulations under this subsection a limitation on such amounts.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, former employers of participants in the Commission's professional fellows programs may pay such participants their actual expenses for relocation to Washington, District of Columbia, to facilitate their participation in such programs, and program participants may accept such payments.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whenever any fee is required to be paid to the Commission pursuant to any provision of the securities laws or any other law, the Commission may provide by rule that such fee shall be paid in a manner other than in cash and the Commission may also specify the time that such fee shall be determined and paid relative to the filing of any statement or document with the Commission.

(f) REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR ASSISTING FOREIGN SECURITIES AUTHORITIES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commission may accept payment and reimbursement, in cash or in kind, from a foreign securities authority, or made on behalf of such authority, for necessary expenses incurred by the Commission, its members, and employees in carrying out any investigation pursuant to section 21(a)(2) of this title or in providing any other assistance to a foreign securities authority. Any payment or reimbursement accepted shall be considered a reimbursement to the appropriated funds of the Commission.

(g) OFFICE OF THE INVESTOR ADVOCATE.—

(1) OFFICE ESTABLISHED.—There is established within the Commission the Office of the Investor Advocate (in this subsection referred to as the "Office").

(2) INVESTOR ADVOCATE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The head of the Office shall be the Investor Advocate, who shall—

- (i) report directly to the Chairman; and
- (ii) be appointed by the Chairman, in consultation with the Commission, from among individuals having experience in advocating for the interests of investors in securities and investor protection issues, from the perspective of investors.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The annual rate of pay for the Investor Advocate shall be equal to the highest rate of annual pay for other senior executives who report to the Chairman of the Commission.

(C) LIMITATION ON SERVICE.—An individual who serves as the Investor Advocate may not be employed by the Commission—

- (i) during the 2-year period ending on the date of appointment as Investor Advocate; or

(ii) during the 5-year period beginning on the date on which the person ceases to serve as the Investor Advocate.

(3) STAFF OF OFFICE.—The Investor Advocate, after consultation with the Chairman of the Commission, may retain or employ independent counsel, research staff, and service staff, as the Investor Advocate deems necessary to carry out the functions, powers, and duties of the Office.

(4) FUNCTIONS OF THE INVESTOR ADVOCATE.—The Investor Advocate shall—

(A) assist retail investors in resolving significant problems such investors may have with the Commission or with self-regulatory organizations;

(B) identify areas in which investors would benefit from changes in the regulations of the Commission or the rules of self-regulatory organizations;

(C) identify problems that investors have with financial service providers and investment products;

(D) analyze the potential impact on investors of—

(i) proposed regulations of the Commission; and

(ii) proposed rules of self-regulatory organizations registered under this title; and

(E) to the extent practicable, propose to the Commission changes in the regulations or orders of the Commission and to Congress any legislative, administrative, or personnel changes that may be appropriate to mitigate problems identified under this paragraph and to promote the interests of investors.

(5) ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS.—The Commission shall ensure that the Investor Advocate has full access to the documents of the Commission and any self-regulatory organization, as necessary to carry out the functions of the Office.

(6) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(A) REPORT ON OBJECTIVES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than June 30 of each year after 2010, the Investor Advocate shall submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report on the objectives of the Investor Advocate for the following fiscal year.

(ii) CONTENTS.—Each report required under clause (i) shall contain full and substantive analysis and explanation.

(B) REPORT ON ACTIVITIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31 of each year after 2010, the Investor Advocate shall submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report on the activities of the Investor Advocate during the immediately preceding fiscal year.

(ii) CONTENTS.—Each report required under clause (i) shall include—

(I) appropriate statistical information and full and substantive analysis;

(II) information on steps that the Investor Advocate has taken during the reporting period to improve investor services and the responsiveness of the Commission and self-regulatory organizations to investor concerns;

(III) a summary of the most serious problems encountered by investors during the reporting period;

(IV) an inventory of the items described in subclause (III) that includes—

(aa) identification of any action taken by the Commission or the self-regulatory organization and the result of such action;

(bb) the length of time that each item has remained on such inventory; and

(cc) for items on which no action has been taken, the reasons for inaction, and an identification of any official who is responsible for such action;

(V) recommendations for such administrative and legislative actions as may be appropriate to resolve problems encountered by investors; and

(VI) any other information, as determined appropriate by the Investor Advocate.

(iii) INDEPENDENCE.—Each report required under this paragraph shall be provided directly to the Committees listed in clause (i) without any prior review or comment from the Commission, any commissioner, any other officer or employee of the Commission, or the Office of Management and Budget.

(iv) CONFIDENTIALITY.—No report required under clause (i) may contain confidential information.

(7) REGULATIONS.—The Commission shall, by regulation, establish procedures requiring a formal response to all recommendations submitted to the Commission by the Investor Advocate, not later than 3 months after the date of such submission.

(8) OMBUDSMAN.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the first Investor Advocate is appointed under paragraph (2)(A)(i), the Investor Advocate shall appoint an Ombudsman, who shall report directly to the Investor Advocate.

(B) DUTIES.—The Ombudsman appointed under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) act as a liaison between the Commission and any retail investor in resolving problems that retail investors may have with the Commission or with self-regulatory organizations;

(ii) review and make recommendations regarding policies and procedures to encourage persons to present questions to the Investor Advocate regarding compliance with the securities laws; and

(iii) establish safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of communications between the persons described in clause (ii) and the Ombudsman.

(C) LIMITATION.—In carrying out the duties of the Ombudsman under subparagraph (B), the Ombudsman shall utilize personnel of the Commission to the extent practicable. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as replacing, altering, or diminishing the activities of any ombudsman or similar office of any other agency.

(D) REPORT.—The Ombudsman shall submit a semi-annual report to the Investor Advocate that describes the activities and evaluates the effectiveness of the Ombudsman during the preceding year. The Investor Advocate shall include the reports required under this section in the reports required to be submitted by the Inspector Advocate under paragraph (6).

(h) EXAMINERS.—

(1) DIVISION OF TRADING AND MARKETS.—The Division of Trading and Markets of the Commission, or any successor organizational unit, shall have a staff of examiners who shall—

(A) perform compliance inspections and examinations of entities under the jurisdiction of that Division; and

(B) report to the Director of that Division.

(2) DIVISION OF INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT.—The Division of Investment Management of the Commission, or any successor organizational unit, shall have a staff of examiners who shall—

(A) perform compliance inspections and examinations of entities under the jurisdiction of that Division; and

(B) report to the Director of that Division.

(i) SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION RESERVE FUND.—

(1) RESERVE FUND ESTABLISHED.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a separate fund, to be known as the “Securities and Exchange Commission Reserve Fund” (referred to in this subsection as the “Reserve Fund”).

(2) RESERVE FUND AMOUNTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), any registration fees collected by the Commission under section 6(b) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77f(b)) or section 24(f) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-24(f)) shall be deposited into the Reserve Fund.

(B) LIMITATIONS.—For any 1 fiscal year—

(i) the amount deposited in the Fund may not exceed \$50,000,000; and

(ii) the balance in the Fund may not exceed \$100,000,000.

(C) EXCESS FEES.—Any amounts in excess of the limitations described in subparagraph (B) that the Commission collects from registration fees under section 6(b) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77f(b)) or section 24(f) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80a-24(f)) shall be deposited in the General Fund of the Treasury of the United States and shall not be available for obligation by the Commission.

(3) USE OF AMOUNTS IN RESERVE FUND.—The Commission may obligate amounts in the Reserve Fund, not to exceed a total of \$100,000,000 in any 1 fiscal year, as the Commission determines is necessary to carry out the functions of the Commission. Any amounts in the reserve fund shall remain available until expended. Not later than 10 days after the date on which the Commission obligates amounts under this paragraph, the Commission shall notify Congress of the date, amount, and purpose of the obligation.

(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Amounts collected and deposited in the Reserve Fund shall not be construed to be Government funds or appropriated monies and shall not be subject to apportionment for the purpose of chapter 15 of title 31, United States Code, or under any other authority.

(j) OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL FORMATION.—

(1) OFFICE ESTABLISHED.—There is established within the Commission the Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation (hereafter in this subsection referred to as the “Office”).

(2) ADVOCATE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL FORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The head of the Office shall be the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation, who shall—

(i) report directly to the Commission; and

(ii) be appointed by the Commission, from among individuals having experience in advocating for the interests of small businesses and encouraging small business capital formation.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The annual rate of pay for the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation shall be equal to the highest rate of annual pay for other senior executives who report directly to the Commission.

(C) NO CURRENT EMPLOYEE OF THE COMMISSION.—An individual may not be appointed as the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation if the individual is currently employed by the Commission.

(3) STAFF OF OFFICE.—The Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation, after consultation with the Commission, may retain or employ independent counsel, research staff, and service staff, as the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation determines to be necessary to carry out the functions of the Office.

(4) FUNCTIONS OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL FORMATION.—The Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation shall—

(A) assist small businesses and small business investors in resolving significant problems such businesses and investors may have with the Commission or with self-regulatory organizations;

(B) identify areas in which small businesses and small business investors would benefit from changes in the regulations of the Commission or the rules of self-regulatory organizations;

(C) identify problems that small businesses have with securing access to capital, including any unique challenges

to [minority-owned and women-owned small businesses] *minority-owned small businesses, women-owned small businesses, and small businesses affected by hurricanes or other natural disasters*;

(D) analyze the potential impact on small businesses and small business investors of—

(i) proposed regulations of the Commission that are likely to have a significant economic impact on small businesses and small business capital formation; and

(ii) proposed rules that are likely to have a significant economic impact on small businesses and small business capital formation of self-regulatory organizations registered under this title;

(E) conduct outreach to small businesses and small business investors, including through regional roundtables, in order to solicit views on relevant capital formation issues;

(F) to the extent practicable, propose to the Commission changes in the regulations or orders of the Commission and to Congress any legislative, administrative, or personnel changes that may be appropriate to mitigate problems identified under this paragraph and to promote the interests of small businesses and small business investors;

(G) consult with the Investor Advocate on proposed recommendations made under subparagraph (F); and

(H) advise the Investor Advocate on issues related to small businesses and small business investors.

(5) ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS.—The Commission shall ensure that the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation has full access to the documents and information of the Commission and any self-regulatory organization, as necessary to carry out the functions of the Office.

(6) ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31 of each year after 2015, the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation shall submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report on the activities of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation during the immediately preceding fiscal year.

(B) CONTENTS.—Each report required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) appropriate statistical information and full and substantive analysis;

(ii) information on steps that the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation has taken during the reporting period to improve small business services and the responsiveness of the Commission and self-regulatory organizations to small business and small business investor concerns;

(iii) a summary of the most serious issues encountered by small businesses and small business investors, including any unique issues encountered by [minority-owned and women-owned small businesses] *minority-owned small businesses, women-owned small*

*businesses, and small businesses affected by hurricanes or other natural disasters* and their investors, during the reporting period;

(iv) an inventory of the items summarized under clause (iii) (including items summarized under such clause for any prior reporting period on which no action has been taken or that have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation as of the beginning of the reporting period covered by the report) that includes—

(I) identification of any action taken by the Commission or the self-regulatory organization and the result of such action;

(II) the length of time that each item has remained on such inventory; and

(III) for items on which no action has been taken, the reasons for inaction, and an identification of any official who is responsible for such action;

(v) recommendations for such changes to the regulations, guidance and orders of the Commission and such legislative actions as may be appropriate to resolve problems with the Commission and self-regulatory organizations encountered by small businesses and small business investors and to encourage small business capital formation; and

(vi) any other information, as determined appropriate by the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation.

(C) CONFIDENTIALITY.—No report required by subparagraph (A) may contain confidential information.

(D) INDEPENDENCE.—Each report required under subparagraph (A) shall be provided directly to the committees of Congress listed in such subparagraph without any prior review or comment from the Commission, any commissioner, any other officer or employee of the Commission, or the Office of Management and Budget.

(7) REGULATIONS.—The Commission shall establish procedures requiring a formal response to all recommendations submitted to the Commission by the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation, not later than 3 months after the date of such submission.

(8) GOVERNMENT-BUSINESS FORUM ON SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL FORMATION.—The Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation shall be responsible for planning, organizing, and executing the annual Government-Business Forum on Small Business Capital Formation described in section 503 of the Small Business Investment Incentive Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 80c-1).



(9) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed as replacing or reducing the responsibilities of the Investor Advocate with respect to small business investors.

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