

I rise in support of the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. I frequently talk with Central New Jersey residents who share my anger with the reckless way Wall Street gamed the system with exotic financial schemes and awarded themselves big bonuses while families and small businesses paid the price. The economic collapse started on Wall Street but it cost 8 million Americans their jobs and \$17 trillion in retirement savings.

This Wall Street reform package will protect consumers through the creation of a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This bureau will act as an independent watchdog with the ability to identify abusive practices in the marketplace and act quickly on behalf of American consumers. The bureau will ensure Americans are not victimized by deceptive practices and hidden fees. It also will make sure that consumers will have accurate information when they shop for credit cards and mortgages. This Consumer Financial Protection Bureau will have a hotline for Americans to call to report unfair practices and establish an Office of Financial Literacy.

Additionally, reform will protect homebuyers from some of the worst predatory lending practices that contributed to the financial meltdown of 2008. Mortgage lenders no longer will be able to make liar loans that borrowers cannot repay; receive kickbacks for steering people into high rate loans when they qualify for lower rates; and apply abusive loan fees and penalties to consumers for prepaying.

This package also will restore responsibility and accountability to Wall Street. Banks will have to get back to banking and no longer will be able to gamble for their own profits with depositors' savings. Currently unregulated derivatives – called “financial weapons of mass destruction” by Warren Buffett – will now be traded in the open and subject to scrutiny. Stockholders will have a vote on executive compensation. And for the first time, hedge fund managers and private equity managers will have to come out of the shadows of our nation's financial system, register with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and be subject to oversight.

I am pleased that reform will prevent taxpayer-funded bailouts of financial giants in the future. This bill will create the Financial Stability Oversight Council, with the ability to unwind big firms if they pose a risk to the nation's financial system. It also establishes an orderly process for liquidating failing companies that will be paid for by the companies' investors and creditors – not taxpayers.

Supporting Wall Street Reform

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While no bill is perfect, this is the strongest reform since the Great Depression. It will put the cops back on the beat on Wall Street and help give Americans confidence that the system works for individuals, families and small businesses – not for big banks. I urge my colleagues to support Wall Street reform.