

Harley-Davidson Shareholder Meeting Question
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My name is David Almasi, and I am representing the National Center for Public Policy Research – a free-market think-tank. I am a personal shareholder. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Despite the fact that the Dodd-Frank bill gave auto dealers a supposed exemption from the oversight of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, yet-to-be confirmed CFPB director Richard Cordray has made it clear he plans to investigate whether auto loans discriminate against minorities.

It's been reported that at least four banks received letters from the CFPB on February 21 asking them to explain their auto loan practices. A month later, a guidance bulletin announced that the Bureau planned to treat indirect auto lenders as creditors under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. And a year ago this month, the CFPB issued guidance announcing it had the ability to punish lenders for policies the government found to have a "disparate impact" on minorities. That means a lender doesn't even have to discriminate in order to be condemned under law as a discriminator.

The writing is on the wall. The Obama Administration is fishing for the excuse to claim there is "disparate impact" in the issuance of vehicle loans. President Obama and his staff appear to want to create a new era of subprime lending with regard to cars as well as motorcycles, boats and aircraft, supposedly in the name of "fairness." But there's nothing fair about it at all.

We've seen this before. It's the strategy that caused the mortgage bubble that helped put our economy in the sad state it's in right now.

I know that Harley Davidson Financial Services has employed a Washington lobby firm to focus on how the CFPB is collecting its data. You obviously know that you are on Richard Cordray's radar, if not already in his sights.

My question to you is, how does Harley-Davidson management plan to protect this company against this assault? Will you cave or will you stand your ground? Are you willing to fight this issue in the halls of Congress and by speaking out in the news media and other venues, or will you buckle to the coffee-break regulators in the bureaucracy?

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