

**Prepared Statement of
Commissioner Rohit Chopra
Before the United States Senate
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs**

March 2, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Toomey, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you to Senator Blumenthal for his kind introduction.

It is an honor to sit before you as the President's nominee to lead the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. I am very grateful for the support of my family, friends, and colleagues who are joining us virtually. I am especially thankful to my parents. I last saw them exactly one year ago to celebrate my mother's birthday, the longest stretch of time in our lives without being in the same room – an experience that is all too common today.

America in March 2021 is far different than America of one year ago. Every week, hundreds of thousands lost their jobs. Local businesses shuttered. And more than 500,000 have died.

While there are some hopeful signs that the tide is turning, we must not forget that the financial lives of millions of Americans are in ruin. Experts expect distress across a number of consumer credit markets, including an avalanche of loan defaults and auto repossessions.

Other persistent pain points for consumers are particularly acute today, making it harder for families to get back on their feet. Consumers continue to discover serious errors on their credit reports or feel forced to make payments to debt collectors on bills they already paid or never owed to begin with, including for medical treatment related to Covid-19. Many of these longstanding, pervasive problems will make it more difficult for our country to sustain a full recovery.

This is especially true when it comes to the housing market. For most of us, much of this last year has been spent at home. Our homes are more than physical structures: they have served as offices, schools, and much more, providing safety and refuge during a deadly pandemic.

But due to the economic devastation stemming from Covid-19, millions face the prospect of losing their home, with communities of color particularly at risk. Many have seen their jobs disappear and will not be able to easily resume their rent and mortgage payments.

In the last economic crisis a decade ago, we saw how unlawful and avoidable foreclosures proved to be catastrophic in cities, small towns, and rural areas alike, contributing to deeper social divisions and inequities. We once again face an important test to ensure that troubles in the housing market do not sabotage the recovery of our local economies.

In the mortgage market, fair and effective oversight can promote a resilient and competitive financial sector, and address the systemic inequities faced by families of color. Perhaps most

importantly, administration of consumer protection laws can help families navigate their options to save their homes.

Congress has entrusted the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with carefully monitoring markets to spot risks, ensuring compliance with existing law, educating consumers, and promoting competition. This not only helps to protect Americans from fraud and other unlawful conduct, it also ensures that law-abiding businesses, regardless of size, can compete.

Three years ago, I sought the Senate's confirmation to serve as an FTC Commissioner. I was honored to be unanimously confirmed and to work with members to build a new bipartisan consensus to turn the page on some of the failed and outdated policies of the past.

If confirmed to lead the CFPB, I pledge to be a good partner to each of you and approach the agency's mission with an open mind and attuned to market realities. I look forward to working with you to tackle the pressing problems that families face in their financial lives during this critical moment for our country.

Thank you again, and I look forward to your questions.