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Phase 2: Co-Ops for Change Expands Effort, Migrates Petition to Website, Initiates Survey and Takes Cooperative Message on the Road

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 20, 2013) – Co-Ops for Change announces several actions to continue promoting a public, democratic process for nominating cooperative-minded regulatory leadership.

The campaign (Coops4Change), begun with a White House Petition on February 25, now offers the credit union community a continuing opportunity to sign the petition to ensure supporters' voices are heard. Everyone can also elect to receive regular campaign updates.

Now, the Co-Ops for Change website has opened an online survey inviting credit union executives to share their perspectives on NCUA examinations and regulatory priorities. Specifically, the survey will provide insight for areas of policy review and how NCUA's examination process can better serve the industry.

"This is another opportunity to engage the credit union community's collective wisdom. Listening to their voices is central to what makes cooperatives different," said Chip Filson, Co-Ops for Change Founder. "For example, publishing NCUA or state examination reports for merged or closed credit unions could be invaluable for all to learn why these credit unions were not successful."

Filson reminded that all NCUA funding comes directly from credit unions. "Credit unions alone pay all the Agency's expenses," he said. "Cooperative principles support the need for credit union and state regulatory representation in oversight positions for both the NCUSIF and CLF."

Randy Karnes, President/CEO of CU*Answers and a key supporter in Co-Ops for Change, says it's vital for credit unions to weigh in on issues of rule interpretation and risk evaluations.

(More)

“Phase 2: Co-Ops for Change”

April 20, 2013/Page Two

“The subjective grading implications of DORs can hurt leadership and board relations,” Karnes said. “Further, the use of ‘closed-door score cards’ don’t allow for appeals or self-audit improvement efforts.”

Karnes says Co-Ops for Change isn’t about making an “industry-friendly regulator.” It’s about making sure the regulator has recognized the special and unique design of the industry over other general or specific financial service models.

“We need the NCUA to specialize in cooperative design principles so the Agency can be the expert in regulating that model,” he said. “But when the regulatory mindset equates all financial organizations as the same, it destroys the opportunity for competitive differences. And when that mindset is, ‘we must divide the *owners* from the *consumers*,’ it destroys the financial organization’s chance to truly take on the consumer’s perspective to drive value, and safety and soundness.”

Over the next several weeks, Filson will speak at a number of credit union events, where he’ll discuss the competitive advantage of the cooperatives even in the face of reassertive capitalism.

“The credit union industry is at a crossroads,” he noted. “We can rise above current habits of reacting to over-regulation and market pressures by reaffirming our distinct role as cooperatives.”

Karnes agrees, noting that what some have interpreted as a short-term, one-time shot at change through the President’s petition process is really a long-term, every-year effort to make sure the credit union community has a voice.

“Co-Ops for Change should be known as the *Co-Ops for constant diligence*, making the NCUA leadership process better and more constant in the minds of credit union owners and vested stakeholders.”

About Co-Ops for Change

Co-Ops for Change is a grassroots movement to increase awareness both within the credit union community and among elected policymakers that our regulatory leadership should understand and support the cooperative principles. The regulatory process should consider credit unions’ cooperative character, as well as the shared economic value they create for people and communities. Credit union members, volunteers, professionals and industry supporters can learn more about the campaign at [Coops4Change](#).

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