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CHANGES FROM THE TOP: THE 2nd TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO SHARPLY LIMIT THE CFPB AND THE GROWING ROLE OF STATE AGS AND OTHER ACTORS IN THE CONSUMER PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

This article explores some of the key changes for financial services enforcement in the beginning of the second Trump presidency. During this time, the administration has emphasized certain enforcement areas — such as de-banking and lending to servicemembers — while also revamping one of the primary mechanisms through which financial services institutions are investigated with drastic changes to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The authors contemplate what may come next — and how other actors may take a more leading role.

By Elizabeth J. Ireland and Starling Gamble *

Perhaps Heraclitus was right, and the only constant in life is change. That seems to be true of the second Trump administration, at least. Indeed, the financial services industry has been rife with change in the opening months of the second Trump administration, and it is hard to argue that the administration's "flood-the-zone" strategy has not been largely effective, as many industry players struggle to keep up with the daily — or hourly — changes being suggested and/or made. Financial services institutions, which usually benefit from Republican administrations, have not been spared from the uncertainty of the second Trump administration.

Take, as one example, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ("CFPB" or "Bureau"). Despite

initial commentary that the CFPB might not exist in the near future, key indicators suggest the Bureau will not only exist — albeit in a different, more "streamlined" form — but will continue to pursue significant enforcement actions pertaining to certain focal areas. Moreover, enforcement gaps left by the Trump administration's "streamlined" CFPB will very likely be filled by state attorneys general ("AGs"), aggressive state and nonprofit actors, and class-action plaintiffs.

Yet the President has been able to *claim* — through actions that largely are not being upheld yet in court — that he is taking swift and decisive action to reduce government spending. On balance, it seems that it may be more of a shift of priorities than a complete rollback,

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