

From: James Paresi
Subject: Electronic Fund Transfers

Comments:

To whom it may concern-

I am voicing my support for strict limitations on fees, and opt-in clauses to limit bank fees on consumer checking accounts.

This has been a disturbingly over-abused scheme that the banks have been perpetrating on customers for years and congress and the Federal Reserve has done nothing to support limiting the financial damage that these fees cause families and individuals.

Because of the billions that are now on the line as a result of the bank stabilization monies, coming out of the pockets of all American taxpayers, this very minimal gesture of good-will toward the average consumer is long-overdue and should be enacted immediately. If I may explain how I think it should work.

No customer should ever be forced to have an automatic overdraft tied to a checking account, at the bank's behest. A customer 'opt-in' should be the only route.

Banks should pay for the largest number of checks, from smallest to largest to limit overdraft fees, should a customer find themselves in that position. Fees should be tiered, and strictly reduced. \$4 for the first offense, \$8 for the second and top out at \$12 for any item thereafter in any given 30 day period. After 10 items, then maybe a bank could add an additional fee, but nominal to limit customer abuses.

Banks should also decline all ATM check card purchases if no funds are in the account to back up the transaction. An opt-in clause should be offered to allow for customers who would not mind paying for that privilege should they want such convenience.

I personally have not had this happen for many years, and have had the good fortune to be able to tell my bank(s) branch managers that I demand the return of such fees when it rarely did occur. With only a few exceptions, this has been the case in my personal experience.

However, I have seen what this despicable and purely predatory practice has done to members of my family, friends and close associates. I have seen them get angry, argue with their banks, become very emotional and pray to make it to their next paycheck just to survive. With some of the banks charging upwards of \$38 per overdraft, the fees sometimes amount in the hundreds of dollars! That is highly unreasonable, considering some of these people make not much more than that an hour. Some of them, in an effort to make it to the end of the month, turned to even worse services such as check-cashing stores, with their (unregulated) usury fees.

The working class and average person in this country has been fleeced for far too long by the 'laisse faire, unregulated, market-driven' ideology that has underpinned the practice of allowing banks to do whatever they pleased with regard to consumer fee and interest structures. It is way past time for this

matter to be rectified.

Even though you are the Federal Reserve, with having to turn to the American taxpayer for assistance and given the severity of this ongoing financial crisis, you should make this rather small gesture to the average citizen and represent the concerns of working people, not just the rich and powerful banking lobby.

As an American businessman and taxpayer, I demand that you press for this alteration of fees and stop hurting the average American in this time of dire financial stress. Thank you.

Cordially yours

James Paresi