

such rule or program or developing new rules or programs, the Commission may—

“(1) gather information from and communicate with investors or other members of the public;

“(2) engage in such temporary investor testing programs as the Commission determines are in the public interest or would protect investors; and

“(3) consult with academics and consultants, as necessary to carry out this subsection.

“(f) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—For purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), any action taken under subsection (e) shall not be construed to be a collection of information.”.

**SEC. 913. STUDY AND RULEMAKING REGARDING OBLIGATIONS OF BROKERS, DEALERS, AND INVESTMENT ADVISERS.**

(a) **DEFINITION.**—For purposes of this section, the term “retail customer” means a natural person, or the legal representative of such natural person, who—

(1) receives personalized investment advice about securities from a broker or dealer or investment adviser; and

(2) uses such advice primarily for personal, family, or household purposes.

(b) **STUDY.**—The Commission shall conduct a study to evaluate—

(1) the effectiveness of existing legal or regulatory standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice and recommendations about securities to retail customers imposed by the Commission and a national securities association, and other Federal and State legal or regulatory standards; and

(2) whether there are legal or regulatory gaps, shortcomings, or overlaps in legal or regulatory standards in the protection of retail customers relating to the standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers that should be addressed by rule or statute.

(c) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—In conducting the study required under subsection (b), the Commission shall consider—

(1) the effectiveness of existing legal or regulatory standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice and recommendations about securities to retail customers imposed by the Commission and a national securities association, and other Federal and State legal or regulatory standards;

(2) whether there are legal or regulatory gaps, shortcomings, or overlaps in legal or regulatory standards in the protection of retail customers relating to the standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice about se-

*curities to retail customers that should be addressed by rule or statute;*

*(3) whether retail customers understand that there are different standards of care applicable to brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers in the provision of personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers;*

*(4) whether the existence of different standards of care applicable to brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers is a source of confusion for retail customers regarding the quality of personalized investment advice that retail customers receive;*

*(5) the regulatory, examination, and enforcement resources devoted to, and activities of, the Commission, the States, and a national securities association to enforce the standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers when providing personalized investment advice and recommendations about securities to retail customers, including—*

*(A) the effectiveness of the examinations of brokers, dealers, and investment advisers in determining compliance with regulations;*

*(B) the frequency of the examinations; and*

*(C) the length of time of the examinations;*

*(6) the substantive differences in the regulation of brokers, dealers, and investment advisers, when providing personalized investment advice and recommendations about securities to retail customers;*

*(7) the specific instances related to the provision of personalized investment advice about securities in which—*

*(A) the regulation and oversight of investment advisers provide greater protection to retail customers than the regulation and oversight of brokers and dealers; and*

*(B) the regulation and oversight of brokers and dealers provide greater protection to retail customers than the regulation and oversight of investment advisers;*

*(8) the existing legal or regulatory standards of State securities regulators and other regulators intended to protect retail customers;*

*(9) the potential impact on retail customers, including the potential impact on access of retail customers to the range of products and services offered by brokers and dealers, of imposing upon brokers, dealers, and persons associated with brokers or dealers—*

*(A) the standard of care applied under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–1 et seq.) for providing personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers of investment advisers, as interpreted by the Commission and the courts; and*

*(B) other requirements of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–1 et seq.);*

(10) the potential impact of eliminating the broker and dealer exclusion from the definition of “investment adviser” under section 202(a)(11)(C) of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–2(a)(11)(C)), in terms of—

(A) the impact and potential benefits and harm to retail customers that could result from such a change, including any potential impact on access to personalized investment advice and recommendations about securities to retail customers or the availability of such advice and recommendations;

(B) the number of additional entities and individuals that would be required to register under, or become subject to, the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–1 et seq.), and the additional requirements to which brokers, dealers, and persons associated with brokers and dealers would become subject, including—

(i) any potential additional associated person licensing, registration, and examination requirements; and

(ii) the additional costs, if any, to the additional entities and individuals; and

(C) the impact on Commission and State resources to—

(i) conduct examinations of registered investment advisers and the representatives of registered investment advisers, including the impact on the examination cycle; and

(ii) enforce the standard of care and other applicable requirements imposed under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (15 U.S.C. 80b–1 et seq.);

(11) the varying level of services provided by brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers to retail customers and the varying scope and terms of retail customer relationships of brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers with such retail customers;

(12) the potential impact upon retail customers that could result from potential changes in the regulatory requirements or legal standards of care affecting brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers relating to their obligations to retail customers regarding the provision of investment advice, including any potential impact on—

(A) protection from fraud;

(B) access to personalized investment advice, and recommendations about securities to retail customers; or

(C) the availability of such advice and recommendations;

(13) the potential additional costs and expenses to—

(A) retail customers regarding and the potential impact on the profitability of their investment decisions; and

(B) brokers, dealers, and investment advisers resulting from potential changes in the regulatory requirements or legal standards affecting brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and per-

sons associated with investment advisers relating to their obligations, including duty of care, to retail customers; and  
 (14) any other consideration that the Commission considers necessary and appropriate in determining whether to conduct a rulemaking under subsection (f).

(d) *REPORT.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit a report on the study required under subsection (b) to—

(A) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(2) *CONTENT REQUIREMENTS.*—The report required under paragraph (1) shall describe the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission from the study required under subsection (b), including—

(A) a description of the considerations, analysis, and public and industry input that the Commission considered, as required under subsection (b), to make such findings, conclusions, and policy recommendations; and

(B) an analysis of whether any identified legal or regulatory gaps, shortcomings, or overlap in legal or regulatory standards in the protection of retail customers relating to the standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers.

(e) *PUBLIC COMMENT.*—The Commission shall seek and consider public input, comments, and data in order to prepare the report required under subsection (d).

(f) *RULEMAKING.*—The Commission may commence a rulemaking, as necessary or appropriate in the public interest and for the protection of retail customers (and such other customers as the Commission may by rule provide), to address the legal or regulatory standards of care for brokers, dealers, investment advisers, persons associated with brokers or dealers, and persons associated with investment advisers for providing personalized investment advice about securities to such retail customers. The Commission shall consider the findings conclusions, and recommendations of the study required under subsection (b).

(g) *AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH A FIDUCIARY DUTY FOR BROKERS AND DEALERS.*—

(1) *SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934.*—Section 15 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78o) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) *STANDARD OF CONDUCT.*—

“(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, the Commission may promulgate rules to provide that, with respect to a broker or dealer, when providing personalized investment advice about securities to a retail customer (and such other customers as the Commission may by rule provide), the standard of conduct for such broker or dealer with respect to such customer shall be the same as the standard of conduct applicable

to an investment adviser under section 211 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. The receipt of compensation based on commission or other standard compensation for the sale of securities shall not, in and of itself, be considered a violation of such standard applied to a broker or dealer. Nothing in this section shall require a broker or dealer or registered representative to have a continuing duty of care or loyalty to the customer after providing personalized investment advice about securities.

“(2) DISCLOSURE OF RANGE OF PRODUCTS OFFERED.—Where a broker or dealer sells only proprietary or other limited range of products, as determined by the Commission, the Commission may by rule require that such broker or dealer provide notice to each retail customer and obtain the consent or acknowledgment of the customer. The sale of only proprietary or other limited range of products by a broker or dealer shall not, in and of itself, be considered a violation of the standard set forth in paragraph (1).

“(1) OTHER MATTERS.—The Commission shall—

“(1) facilitate the provision of simple and clear disclosures to investors regarding the terms of their relationships with brokers, dealers, and investment advisers, including any material conflicts of interest; and

“(2) examine and, where appropriate, promulgate rules prohibiting or restricting certain sales practices, conflicts of interest, and compensation schemes for brokers, dealers, and investment advisers that the Commission deems contrary to the public interest and the protection of investors.”

(2) INVESTMENT ADVISERS ACT OF 1940.—Section 211 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(g) STANDARD OF CONDUCT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may promulgate rules to provide that the standard of conduct for all brokers, dealers, and investment advisers, when providing personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers (and such other customers as the Commission may by rule provide), shall be to act in the best interest of the customer without regard to the financial or other interest of the broker, dealer, or investment adviser providing the advice. In accordance with such rules, any material conflicts of interest shall be disclosed and may be consented to by the customer. Such rules shall provide that such standard of conduct shall be no less stringent than the standard applicable to investment advisers under sections 206(1) and (2) of this Act when providing personalized investment advice about securities, except the Commission shall not ascribe a meaning to the term ‘customer’ that would include an investor in a private fund managed by an investment adviser, where such private fund has entered into an advisory contract with such adviser. The receipt of compensation based on commission or fees shall not, in and of itself, be considered a violation of such standard applied to a broker, dealer, or investment adviser.

“(2) RETAIL CUSTOMER DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘retail customer’ means a natural person, or the legal representative of such natural person, who—

“(A) receives personalized investment advice about securities from a broker, dealer, or investment adviser; and

“(B) uses such advice primarily for personal, family, or household purposes.

“(h) OTHER MATTERS.—The Commission shall—

“(1) facilitate the provision of simple and clear disclosures to investors regarding the terms of their relationships with brokers, dealers, and investment advisers, including any material conflicts of interest; and

“(2) examine and, where appropriate, promulgate rules prohibiting or restricting certain sales practices, conflicts of interest, and compensation schemes for brokers, dealers, and investment advisers that the Commission deems contrary to the public interest and the protection of investors.”

(h) HARMONIZATION OF ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934.—Section 15 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended by subsection (g)(1), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(m) HARMONIZATION OF ENFORCEMENT.—The enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to violations of the standard of conduct applicable to a broker or dealer providing personalized investment advice about securities to a retail customer shall include—

“(1) the enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to such violations provided under this Act; and

“(2) the enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to violations of the standard of conduct applicable to an investment adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, including the authority to impose sanctions for such violations, and

the Commission shall seek to prosecute and sanction violators of the standard of conduct applicable to a broker or dealer providing personalized investment advice about securities to a retail customer under this Act to same extent as the Commission prosecutes and sanctions violators of the standard of conduct applicable to an investment adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.”

(2) INVESTMENT ADVISERS ACT OF 1940.—Section 211 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended by subsection (g)(2), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(i) HARMONIZATION OF ENFORCEMENT.—The enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to violations of the standard of conduct applicable to an investment adviser shall include—

“(1) the enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to such violations provided under this Act; and

“(2) the enforcement authority of the Commission with respect to violations of the standard of conduct applicable to a broker or dealer providing personalized investment advice about securities to a retail customer under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, including the authority to impose sanctions for such violations, and

the Commission shall seek to prosecute and sanction violators of the standard of conduct applicable to an investment adviser under this Act to same extent as the Commission prosecutes and sanctions vio-

lators of the standard of conduct applicable to a broker or dealer providing personalized investment advice about securities to a retail customer under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.”

**SEC. 914. STUDY ON ENHANCING INVESTMENT ADVISER EXAMINATIONS.**

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Commission shall review and analyze the need for enhanced examination and enforcement resources for investment advisers.

(2) **AREAS OF CONSIDERATION.**—The study required by this subsection shall examine—

(A) the number and frequency of examinations of investment advisers by the Commission over the 5 years preceding the date of the enactment of this subtitle;

(B) the extent to which having Congress authorize the Commission to designate one or more self-regulatory organizations to augment the Commission’s efforts in overseeing investment advisers would improve the frequency of examinations of investment advisers; and

(C) current and potential approaches to examining the investment advisory activities of dually registered broker-dealers and investment advisers or affiliated broker-dealers and investment advisers.

(b) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—The Commission shall report its findings to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subtitle, and shall use such findings to revise its rules and regulations, as necessary. The report shall include a discussion of regulatory or legislative steps that are recommended or that may be necessary to address concerns identified in the study.

**SEC. 915. OFFICE OF THE INVESTOR ADVOCATE.**

Section 4 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78d) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) **OFFICE OF THE INVESTOR ADVOCATE.**—

“(1) **OFFICE ESTABLISHED.**—There is established within the Commission the Office of the Investor Advocate (in this subsection referred to as the ‘Office’).

“(2) **INVESTOR ADVOCATE.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The head of the Office shall be the Investor Advocate, who shall—

“(i) report directly to the Chairman; and

“(ii) be appointed by the Chairman, in consultation with the Commission, from among individuals having experience in advocating for the interests of investors in securities and investor protection issues, from the perspective of investors.

“(B) **COMPENSATION.**—The annual rate of pay for the Investor Advocate shall be equal to the highest rate of annual pay for other senior executives who report to the Chairman of the Commission.

“(C) **LIMITATION ON SERVICE.**—An individual who serves as the Investor Advocate may not be employed by the Commission—