

Anti-CFPB Crusaders Blaine Luetkemeyer And Andy Barr Follow Industry In Attacking Latest Efforts Against Junk Fees After Taking Over \$400,000 in Contributions

Summary: On October 11, 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration [hosted](#) a White House event alongside Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) director Rohit Chopra and Federal Trade Commission Chair (FTC) Lina Khan. The two regulators announced new proposals aimed at further cracking down on hidden and surprise "junk fees," which [cost American consumers billions every year](#).

The CFPB [issued guidance](#) barring large banks and community banks from being able to charge for basic services such as checking account balances and paying off loans, among other added fees. The CFPB [will also](#) unveil a rule later this month to make it easier for consumers to switch banks that have better offerings by requiring banks to allow customers to more reliably send transaction data to competitors. The FTC also [unveiled proposed rulemaking](#) that would ban companies across the hotel, apartment, and entertainment industries from being able to charge hidden fees, requiring them to disclose these upfront.

Immediately following the announcement, industry groups representing [banks](#) and [other](#) impacted [industries](#) denounced the administration's efforts, claiming the moves were forms of "[price controls](#)" and failed to reflect the "reality" that "banks operate in one of the most highly regulated and competitive markets."

Meanwhile, staunch anti-CFPB crusaders **Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO)** and **Andy Barr (R-KY)** both immediately denounced the CFPB's proposed rulemaking. A review by Accountable.US found Luetkemeyer and Barr have taken a combined **\$401,500** from the very trade groups denouncing the administration's efforts to save consumers money.

- On October 11, 2023, **Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer** called junk fees a "[vague term](#)," claiming the CFPB's proposal "[is another example of Biden's regulators putting small and regional institutions at a competitive disadvantage](#)." Luetkemeyer has received **\$249,000** from trade groups opposed to the CFPB's and FTC's latest proposed rules.
- On October 11, 2023, **Rep. Andy Barr** called the CFPB's rulemaking on junk fees "[overly vague](#)," claiming the move served as a "[continued promotion of a political campaign to disparage the private sector](#)." Throughout his time in Congress, Barr has taken **\$152,500** from trade groups opposed to the administration's latest rules.

These contributions raise the question of whether or not these representatives truly are looking out for consumers or just their industry donors.

On October 11, 2023, The Biden-Harris Administration Announced Rulemaking Proposals From The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau And Federal Trade Commission Aimed At Further Reducing Hidden Junk Fees That Add Costs To Consumers Across The Banking, Hotel, Apartment, And Entertainment Industries.

On October 11, 2023, The Biden-Harris Administration Joined The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) And Federal Trade Commission (FTC) In Announcing Major Rulemaking From The Federal Regulators Aimed At Further Cracking Down On Hidden And Surprise "Junk Fees" That Stifle Competition And Increase Costs For Consumers.

On October 11, 2023, The Biden-Harris Administration, Including The Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) And Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Announced New Efforts To Crackdown On Hidden "Junk Fees," Or The Hidden And Surprise Fees Companies Tack On To Consumer Purchases. "Today, President Biden will be joined by Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair Lina Khan and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Director Rohit Chopra as they announce new efforts to crack down on junk fees and bring down costs for American consumers. Junk fees are hidden, surprise fees that companies sneak onto customer bills, increasing costs and stifling competition in industries across the economy." [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

The CFPB Announced Two Actions Aimed At Barring Banks And Credit Unions From Charging Fees For Basic Services And Requiring Banks To Send Transaction Data To Other Banks In An Effort To Make It Easier To Switch To Banks That Offer Better Perks.

On October 11, 2023, The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Issued Guidance "Requir[ing] Large Banks And Credit Unions To Provide Basic Information To Consumers Without Charging Fees," Such As Fees For Obtaining A Payoff Amount For A Loan, Getting Account Information, And Fees For Checking Account Balances. "The CFPB is taking action to require large banks and credit unions to provide basic information to consumers without charging fees—meaning no more fees for basic services like checking bank account balances, obtaining a payoff amount for a loan, or getting account information needed for applications." [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

The CFPB Also Announced It Would Propose A Rule That Would "Allow Customers To Safely, Securely, And Reliably Send Their Banking Transaction Data To Other Companies And Banks," In An Effort To Make It Easier For Consumers To Switch To Banks With Better Offerings. "Later this month, the CFPB will propose a rule that, if finalized, would require financial companies to allow customers to safely, securely, and reliably send their banking transaction data to other companies and banks. The proposal would make it easier for people to break up with their bank, switch to banks with better offerings, and to manage accounts from multiple providers. This reform will ensure financial companies compete based on service quality and up-front pricing, deterring junk fees." [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

Data Released By The CFPB Also Found Bounced Checks Fees Had Decreased By More Than 86% Since 2021, "Saving Consumers Nearly \$2 Billion," And "Add[ing] To The \$5.5 Billion Annual Reduction In Banking Junk Fees Achieved By The Biden-Harris Administration." "CFPB finds that bounced check fees are down more than 86 percent since 2021—saving consumers nearly \$2 billion—and that nearly two-thirds of large banks have eliminated these fees entirely. Previous CFPB studies have shown that bounced check fees, which can cost \$30-40 per transaction, hit low income and minority Americans the hardest. This new finding adds to the \$5.5 billion annual reduction in banking junk fees achieved by the Biden-Harris Administration, for a total of an average of \$170 in annual savings for the 33 million households that pay these fees." [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

The FTC Proposed Rules That Would Ban Businesses From Charging Hidden And Misleading Fees By Requiring Them To Show These Costs Up Front, Impacting The Hotel, Apartment, And Car Rental Industries, Among Others.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Is Proposing A Rule That "Would Ban Businesses From Charging Hidden And Misleading Fees And Require Them To Show The Full Price Up Front," Including Whether Or Not Fees Are Refundable. "The FTC is proposing a rule that, if finalized as proposed, would ban businesses from charging hidden and misleading fees and require them to show the full price up front. The rule would also require companies disclose up front whether fees are refundable" [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

- **This Would Apply To Resort Fees At Checkout Or Unexpected Fees While Checking Out For Live Events Such As A Concert, Impacting Industries Such As Hotels, Apartment Rentals, Car Rentals, And More.** "This would mean no more surprise resort fees at check out or unexpected service fees to buy a live event ticket. The rule would apply to industries across the economy, including event tickets, hotels and lodging, apartment rentals, car rentals, and more. Under the proposed rule, companies that fail to comply could face monetary penalties and have to provide refunds to consumers." [The White House, [10/11/23](#)]

Following The Announced Rulemakings, The U.S. Chamber Of Commerce, Consumer Bankers Association And Independent Community Bankers Of America Claimed These Efforts Would "Stifle" Innovation And Increase Costs For Consumers, Claiming The Banking Industry Is Already Heavily Regulated.

U.S. Chamber Of Commerce Executive Vice President And Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley Called The Actions "Price Controls" "That Will Only Stifle The Innovation That Leads To More Choices And Lower Prices For Consumers."

October 11, 2023: U.S. Chamber Of Commerce Executive Vice President And Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley Claimed The Proposed Actions Were Price Controls That "Will Only Stifle The Innovation That Leads To More Choices And Lower Prices For Consumers." "The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer, Neil Bradley, released the following statement in response to the White House's announcement of new government regulations on pricing of goods and services. 'Every minute of every day, Americans engage in close to 400,000 transactions, buying and selling goods and services. It is baffling that the administration believes it is going to help consumers by regulating how businesses price all of those transactions. The reality is this attempt at price controls will only stifle the innovation that leads to more choices and lower prices for consumers.'" [U.S. Chamber of Commerce, [10/11/23](#)]

Consumer Bankers Association President And CEO Lindsey Johnson Said The Biden Administration's Move To Curb Junk Fees Was Rhetoric That Failed To Reflect The Reality The Banking Sector Is One Of The Most Regulated And Competitive Markets.

October 11, 2023: The Consumer Bankers Association President And CEO Lindsey Johnson Said, "Nobody Likes To Pay Unnecessary Fees And The Reality Is Banks Operate In One Of The Most Highly Regulated And Competitive Markets," Adding The Biden Administration Is "Once Again Us[ing] Rhetoric That Fails To Reflect This Reality And Mischaracterizes" The Banking Sector. "Consumer Bankers Association (CBA) President and CEO Lindsey Johnson today released the following statement after the White House Rose Garden event with officials from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and other agencies focused on efforts to curb fees across various industries. [...] 'Nobody likes to pay unnecessary fees and the reality is that banks operate in one of the most highly regulated and competitive markets in the world. It is deeply concerning to see this Administration once again use rhetoric that fails to reflect this reality and mischaracterizes an industry whose central mission is to strengthen the financial well-being of millions of Americans on Main Streets across this nation.'" [Consumer Bankers Association, [10/11/23](#)]

Following The CFPB's Actions Impacting Community Banks, ICBA President And CEO Rebeca Romero Rainey Urged The CFPB To Not "Interfere With Community Banks' Ability To Serve Their Customers."

October 11, 2023: Independent Community Bankers Of America President And CEO Rebeca Romero Rainey "Caution[ed]" The CFPB On Its Proposed Rulemaking Affecting Community Banks, Claiming It Would "Interfere With Community Banks' Ability To Serve Their Customers." "Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) President and CEO Rebeca Romero Rainey issued the following statement on today's guidance from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. 'While today's guidance purportedly recognizes community banks' unique relationship-based business model, ICBA cautions that it must not interfere with community banks' ability to serve their customers. Community banks work one-on-one with their customers and provide a wide range of products and services to meet their unique needs. Consumer protection is inherently part of their relationship banking business model and has been for generations.' [Independent Community Bankers of America, [10/11/23](#)]

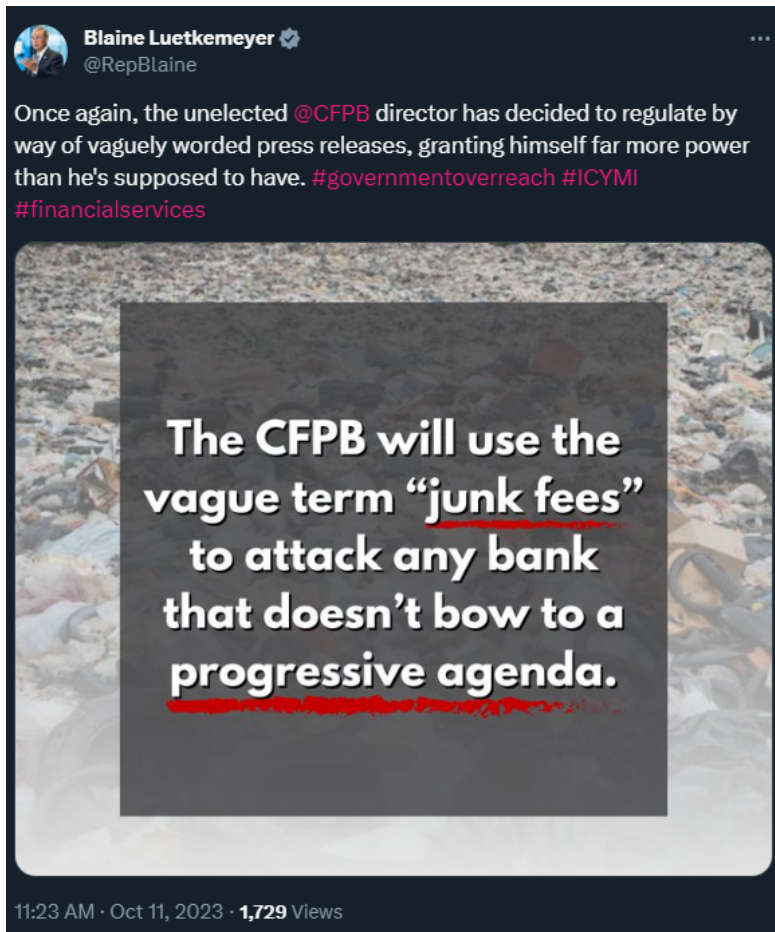
National Apartment Association President And CEO Bob Pinnegar Claimed The FTC's Proposed Rule Would Impact The "Affordability And Availability" Of Apartments, Claiming Member Companies Disclose Their Fees During The Application And Leasing Process.

October 11, 2023: National Apartment Association President And CEO Bob Pinnegar Claimed The FTC's Proposed Rule Will Negatively Impact "Affordability And Availability Of Rental Housing," Claiming Member Companies Disclose Fees At The Beginning Of The Application And Leasing Process. "Statement from National Apartment Association (NAA) President & CEO Bob Pinnegar on the Federal Trade Commission's proposed rule on junk fees: 'The National Apartment Association and our network of more than 92,000 members nationwide strongly support transparency and dialogue between housing providers and their residents – beginning with the leasing process and extending throughout the resident's time in their apartment home. Rental housing fees are disclosed in the lease and during the application and leasing process. It is incumbent on both parties to ensure they can uphold the terms of their contractual agreement. Policymakers must understand that layering additional regulations will heavily impact housing operations and harm the affordability and availability of rental housing, ultimately hurting the very individuals they seek to protect.'" [National Apartment Association, [10/11/23](#)]

Representatives Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) And Andy Barr (R-KY), Who Claimed Junk Fees Are A "Vague Term" And The Proposed Rulemaking Was Part Of A "Political Campaign To Disparage The Private Sector," Have Received Over \$400,000 From Industry Groups Opposed To Regulators' Latest Rulemaking On Junk Fees.

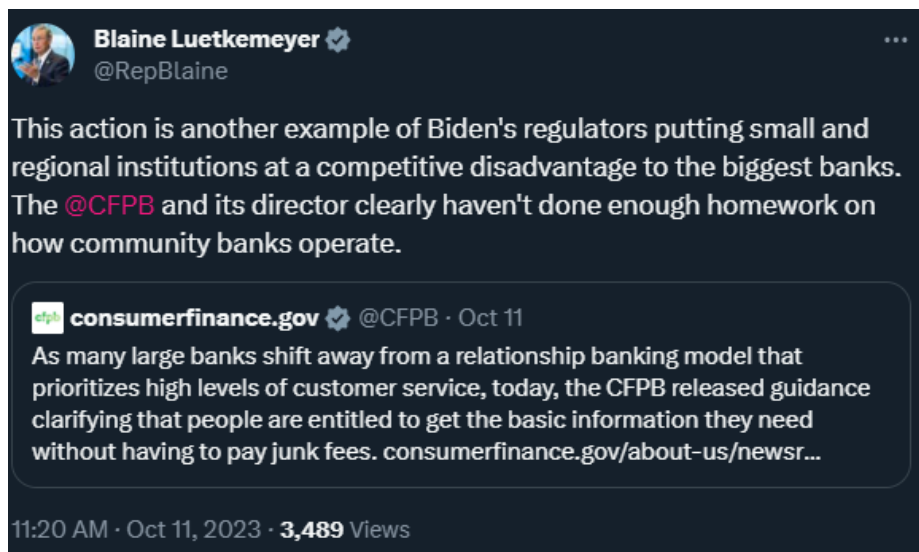
Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO), Who Called Junk Fees A "Vague Term" And Railed Against The CFPB's Proposed Rulemaking, Has Received \$249,000 From Industry Groups Opposed To The Biden-Harris Administration's Latest Efforts To Crackdown On Hidden Fees.

October 11, 2023: Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) Said "The CFPB Will Use The Vague Term 'Junk Fees' To Attack Any Bank That Doesn't Bow To A Progressive Agenda":



[X formerly known as Twitter, [10/11/23](#)]

October 11, 2023: Rep. Luetkemeyer Also Said The CFPB's Latest Guidance Was "Another Example Of Biden's Regulators Putting Small And Regional Institutions At A Competitive Disadvantage To The Biggest Banks," Claiming The Agency And Director Chopra "Clearly Haven't Done Enough Homework On How Community Banks Operate":



[X formerly known as Twitter, [10/11/23](#)]

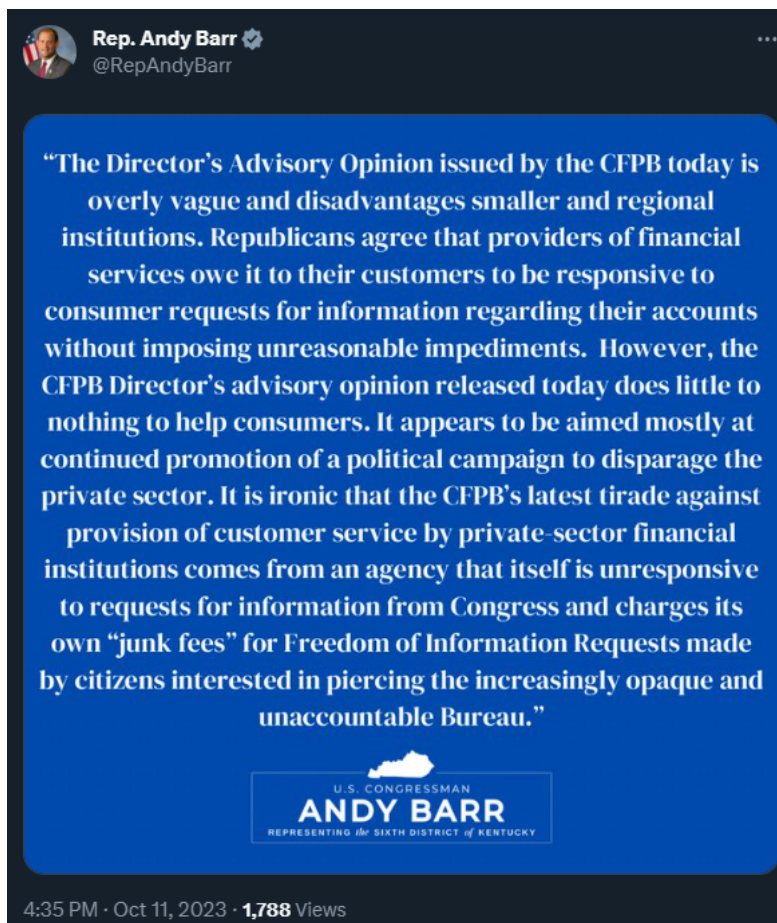
Throughout His Career, Rep. Luetkemeyer Has Taken \$249,000 From Trade Groups Opposed To The Latest Junk Fee Rulemaking From The CFPB And FTC:

Trade Group	Contributions*
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$3,500
Consumer Bankers Association	\$72,000
Independent Community Bankers of America	\$132,500
National Apartment Association	\$41,000
TOTAL: \$249,000	

*Total includes contributions made to sponsored leadership PACs

Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY), Who Called The CFPB's Rulemaking On Junk Fees "Overly Vague" And A "Continued Promotion Of A Political Campaign To Disparage The Private Sector," Has Received A Combined \$152,500 From Industry Groups Opposed To The Biden-Harris Administration's Latest Efforts To Crackdown On Hidden Fees.

October 2023: Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY) Claimed The CFPB's Guidance Was "Overly Vague," Adding "It Appears To Be Aimed Mostly At Continued Promotion Of A Political Campaign To Disparage The Private Sector":



[X formerly known as Twitter, [10/11/23](#)]

Throughout His Career, Rep. Barr Has Taken \$152,500 From Trade Groups Opposed To The Latest Junk Fee Rulemaking From The CFPB And FTC:

Trade Group	Contributions*
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$5,000
Consumer Bankers Association	\$19,500
Independent Community Bankers of America	\$82,000
National Apartment Association	\$46,000
TOTAL: \$152,500	

*Total includes contributions made to sponsored leadership PACs