

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

Received: December 01, 2023 Tracking No. lpm-spor-hbo5 Comments Due: January 02, 2024 Submission Type: API

Docket: EBSA-2023-0014
Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary

Comment On: EBSA-2023-0014-0001
Retirement Security Rule: Definition of an Investment Advice Fiduciary

Document: 1210-AC02 comment 00401 Stegink 12012023

Submitter Information

Name: Mark Stegink

General Comment

I am an independent financial advisor who provides financial planning and other services to help Main Street Americans plan for a secure financial future. Many of my clients are first-time investors and/or smaller balance investors who are not serviced through advisory programs (due to insufficient balances). As a member of the Financial Services Institute, I am writing to express my concern with the Department of Labor's (DOL) recently proposed Retirement Security Rule. If adopted, the Proposed Rule will harm the very retirement savers it seeks to help by limiting their access to the affordable financial advice, products and services on which they rely to secure a dignified retirement.

Having a relationship with a trusted financial advisor helps people save more for retirement. I provide my clients with comprehensive financial advice and as an independent financial advisor, I can recommend products that are in their best interest. Currently, my clients can choose how to pay for that financial advice. Far from being a "junk fee," commissions are an important way that advisors are able to serve those who may not otherwise be able to afford to work with an advisor because they have less investable assets. If this rule is finalized, I will be unable to work with smaller accounts or help lower and middle-income savers plan for retirement. This will most impact those earning below \$100,000 per year. These investors are already feeling like the financial mountain they need to climb is nearly impossible and these rule

changes build additional walls to obtaining the financial advice and guidance that they deserve.

The DOL proposed a similar rule in 2016 and as a result more than 10 million smaller retirement account owners could no longer afford to work with their financial advisor. Not only did a Federal Court invalidate the 2016 Rule, but the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) and state regulators imposed their own best interest standards. In light of the SEC's Regulation Best Interest, the fact that more than forty states have adopted the NAIC model regulation, and DOL's PTE 2020-02, which requires compliance with already established conduct standards, the proposed Retirement Security Rule is unnecessary.

I urge the DOL to withdraw this rulemaking to support Main Street investors, small business owners, and our community's access to crucial financial advice.