

Anna Alvarez Boyd

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It is really my pleasure welcome you to the Federal Reserve Board today. My name is Anna Alvarez Boyd, and I'm the associate director here in the Division of Consumer and Community Affairs. The Federal Reserve Board recognizes that mobile financial services is a rapidly growing segment of the financial sector; it's already changing the way consumers do business. We really hope that today's forum will be a venue to discuss opportunities, to leverage new mobile technology, to reach under-served consumers and to begin a dialogue about challenges or possible areas of concern. We really want this to be the beginning of the conversation.

You have a distinguished panel of speakers today that are going to discuss both mobile banking and mobile payment services. While these sectors really represent two different sets of issues, both fields have the potential to rapidly change how consumers conduct their financial lives. You think you're probably already seeing that on a day-to-day basis, particularly if you have teenagers like I do. We're excited to have today with us a rich array of expertise, not only among our wonderful presenters, but also among our invited guests. We want to get the most out of our day, and to that extent we encourage you all to be active participants in the discussion.

For the Federal Reserve our purpose today is two-fold. The first is to hear from the experts on the most up to date information about technological developments and what products and services we can expect to see as a result. The second is to ask very explicitly what policymakers in Washington, including the Fed, should be monitoring as these services evolve. Where are there opportunities for consumers that should be promoted? Where are the risks to consumers that should be monitored? Are current laws and regulations designed to protect consumers adequate to a changing market? Is there a need for consumer education in this space?

This issue really has particular significance for me as a policymaker. In the early '90s I was a consumer lobbyist in the state of California, and one of issues I worked on was affordable access to telephone services for low-income consumers, and the good folks of Pacific Bell at the time invited us out to their headquarters and showed us a set of new technology, cell phones, tiny little phones, that would soon, they said, in five years everyone would have one of these in their pockets. And I have to say that at that time my imagination failed me. The question of what should we do to protect people eluded me in that day. So I find it ironic today that I have the opportunity to ask today, what should we be doing to protect consumers? Today, 93 percent of people have a cell phone in their pocket. And teenagers are way ahead of us on that score as well, and are pushing the envelope for us on the types of services they want.

So before I turn the program over to Dave Buchholz, I want to take a moment to thank the staff. These types of events don't come about out of just sheer imagination. Their creativity, their intellectual curiosity, their commitment to excellence make this day a reality. So I want to thank Allen Fishbein, Dave Buchholz, Ren Essene, Casey Bell, who came to my office one day and said, "You know, you can take a picture of a check on this

iPhone and send it to your bank and deposit it.” After I picked my jaw up off my desk, I said, “Casey, let's talk more about that.” Bridget Spaniel, I want to thank Bridget for helping out with this event, and Rachelle Hunt and Shalyce Fryer, and Monica Ray [spelled phonetically]. I'm sure there's a number of other folks throughout the day that you'll be meeting from the Federal Reserve Board. Please engage us in your best thoughts about how we move forward. Thank you, and I'm going to turn the day over to your emcee for the day, David Buchholz

[applause]

[end of transcript]