This month, President Obama signed into law the most important financial and consumer protection law in years as part of Congress's Wall Street reform legislation. **The Wall Street reform legislation** contains many provisions designed to prevent future taxpayer-funded bailouts and curb unfair tactics banks perpetrate on consumers.

Important aspects of the Wall Street Reform legislation:

- Expanded Federal Insurance Deposit Corporation (FDIC) powers to identify and reign in failing banks and financial institutions that have become so big that they threaten to impact the whole economy;
- Consumer regulations requiring banks and financial institutions to be more truthful in the way they deal with consumers;
- Nonbinding shareholder votes on executive compensation packages.
- Crack-down on debit card fees; and
- Limiting the packaging of derivatives that led to the 2008 financial meltdown where banks issued risky loans, made money off those transactions and bundled the risky assets for sale disguised as healthy investments.

One of the more interesting developments in this legislation is the authorization of a consumer protection agency that will monitor and expose exploitation and fraudulent treatment of consumers. A partisan battle over who will head the agency is **already underway**. Consumer advocates **strongly back** Elizabeth Warren, who has been a vocal whistleblower on Wall Street abuses. Whether Ms. Warren is appointed and confirmed to head this agency will tell us a lot about the strength of the consumer protection that comes from this legislation.

Wall Street reform is not as strong as many consumer advocates wanted due to watering down of the bill to gain support of legislators who traditionally align themselves in the interest of large corporations. However, the increased transparency put in place is long overdue and is a step in the right direction.