

FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, WAIVER AND CONSENT
NO. 20130377916-01

TO: Department of Market Regulation
Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA")

RE: Sandler, O'Neill & Partners, L.P., Respondent
Broker-Dealer
CRD No. 23328

Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216 of FINRA's Code of Procedure, Sandler, O'Neill & Partners, L.P. (the "firm") submits this Letter of Acceptance, Waiver and Consent ("AWC") for the purpose of proposing a settlement of the alleged rule violations described below. This AWC is submitted on the condition that, if accepted, FINRA will not bring any future actions against the firm alleging violations based on the same factual findings described herein.

I.

ACCEPTANCE AND CONSENT

- A. The firm hereby accepts and consents, without admitting or denying the findings, and solely for the purposes of this proceeding and any other proceeding brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, prior to a hearing and without an adjudication of any issue of law or fact, to the entry of the following findings by FINRA:

BACKGROUND

The firm has been a member of FINRA since November 23, 1988, and its registration remains in effect. The firm does not have any relevant disciplinary history.

SUMMARY

In Review No. 20130377916, the TRACE Agency/SP Team of the Department of Market Regulation reviewed the firm's compliance with the requirement to accurately report execution times in TRACE-eligible Securitized Products in compliance with FINRA Rule 6730(c)(8), during the period of April 1, 2013, through June 30, 2013 (the "review period").

FACTS AND VIOLATIVE CONDUCT

1. During the review period, the firm failed to report to TRACE the correct time of trade execution for 81 transactions in TRACE-eligible Securitized Products. These inaccurate reports constituted 8.11 percent of the 999 matched inter-dealer reports that the firm submitted to TRACE during the review period. The conduct described in this paragraph constitutes separate and distinct violations of FINRA Rule 6730(c)(8).

2. During the review period, the firm failed to show the correct time of execution on the memoranda of 76 brokerage orders. The conduct described in this paragraph constitutes separate and distinct violations of Rule 17a-3 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and FINRA Rule 4511(a).

- B. The firm also consents to the imposition of the following sanctions:

A censure and a fine of \$7,500 (\$5,000 for the Rule 6730(c)(8) violations and \$2,500 for the Rule 17a-3 and Rule 4511(a) violations).

The firm agrees to pay the monetary sanctions upon notice that this AWC has been accepted and that such payments are due and payable. It has submitted an Election of Payment form showing the method by which it proposes to pay the fine imposed.

The firm specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim that it is unable to pay, now or at any time hereafter, the monetary sanctions imposed in this matter.

The sanctions imposed herein shall be effective on a date set by FINRA staff.

II.

WAIVER OF PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

The firm specifically and voluntarily waives the following rights granted under FINRA's Code of Procedure:

- A. To have a Complaint issued specifying the allegations against the firm;
- B. To be notified of the Complaint and have the opportunity to answer the allegations in writing;
- C. To defend against the allegations in a disciplinary hearing before a hearing panel, to have a written record of the hearing made and to have a written decision issued; and
- D. To appeal any such decision to the National Adjudicatory Council ("NAC") and then to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and a U.S. Court of Appeals.

Further, the firm specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim bias or prejudgment of the General Counsel, the NAC, or any member of the NAC, in connection with such person's or body's participation in discussions regarding the terms and conditions of this AWC, or other consideration of this AWC, including acceptance or rejection of this AWC.

The firm further specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim that a person violated the ex parte prohibitions of FINRA Rule 9143 or the separation of functions prohibitions of FINRA Rule 9144, in connection with such person's or body's participation in discussions regarding the terms and conditions of this AWC, or other consideration of this AWC, including its acceptance or rejection.

III.

OTHER MATTERS

The firm understands that:

- A. Submission of this AWC is voluntary and will not resolve this matter unless and until it has been reviewed and accepted by the NAC, a Review Subcommittee of the NAC, or the Office of Disciplinary Affairs (“ODA”), pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216;
- B. If this AWC is not accepted, its submission will not be used as evidence to prove any of the allegations against the firm; and
- C. If accepted:
 - 1. this AWC will become part of the firm’s permanent disciplinary record and may be considered in any future actions brought by FINRA or any other regulator *against the firm*;
 - 2. this AWC will be made available through FINRA's public disclosure program in response to public inquiries about the firm’s disciplinary record;
 - 3. FINRA may make a public announcement concerning this agreement and the subject matter thereof in accordance with FINRA Rule 8313; and
 - 4. The firm may not take any action or make or permit to be made any public statement, including in regulatory filings or otherwise, denying, directly or indirectly, any finding in this AWC or create the impression that the AWC is without factual basis. The firm may not take any position in any proceeding brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, that is inconsistent with any part of this AWC. Nothing in this provision affects the firm’s: (i) testimonial obligations; or (ii) right to take legal or factual positions in litigation or other legal proceedings in which FINRA is not a party.
- D. The firm may attach a Corrective Action Statement to this AWC that is a statement of demonstrable corrective steps taken to prevent future misconduct. The firm understands that it may not deny the charges or make any statement that is inconsistent with the AWC in this Statement. This Statement does not constitute factual or legal findings by FINRA, nor does it reflect the views of FINRA or its staff.

The undersigned, on behalf of the Firm, certifies that a person duly authorized to act on its behalf has read and understands all of the provisions of this AWC and has been given a full opportunity to ask questions about it; that it has agreed to the AWC's provisions voluntarily; and that no offer, threat, inducement, or promise of any kind, other than the terms set forth herein and the prospect of avoiding the issuance of a Complaint, has been made to induce the firm to submit it.

March 13, 2014

Date

Respondent

Sandler, O'Neill & Partners, L.P.

By: Sandler O'Neill & Partners Corp., its sole general partner

By: Christopher S. Hooper

Name: Christopher S. Hooper

Title: An Officer of the Corporation

Reviewed by:

Russell M. Fecteau

Russell M. Fecteau
Counsel for Respondent
Bingham McCutchen LLP
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Accepted by FINRA:

April 16, 2014

Date

Signed on behalf of the
Director of ODA, by delegated authority

James J. Nixon

James J. Nixon
Chief Litigation Counsel, Legal Section
Department of Market Regulation