

**FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, WAIVER AND CONSENT
NO. 2014039219801**

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

RE: Christopher Paul Richards, Respondent
General Securities Representative
CRD No. 4799136

Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216 of FINRA's Code of Procedure, I submit 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 me alleging violations based on the same factual findings described herein.

I.

ACCEPTANCE AND CONSENT

- A. I hereby accept and consent, 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

Christopher Paul Richards ("Richards") entered the securities industry in May 2004 as a General Securities Representative and was employed with three FINRA-registered firms before becoming registered with First Midwest Securities, Inc. ("First Midwest") in October 2008. Richards' registration with First Midwest was terminated in February 2013, when he became registered with his current employer, another FINRA-registered firm.

RELEVANT DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

Richards has no relevant disciplinary history.

OVERVIEW

Between January 2011 and December 2012, Richards exercised discretion in the account of one of his customers without obtaining prior written authorization from the customer or prior written approval from First Midwest, in violation of NASD Rule 2510(b) and FINRA Rule 2010.

FACTS AND VIOLATIVE CONDUCT

Between January 2011 and December 2012, Richards exercised discretion in a customer's securities account. Richards received verbal authorization and approval from his customer for purchases and sales of products, but exercised his discretion in executing those transactions on future dates.

Richards did not obtain written authorization from his customer to exercise discretion in his account or obtain written authorization from First Midwest Securities to service the account on a discretionary basis.

As a result of the foregoing conduct, Richards violated NASD Conduct Rule 2510(b) and FINRA Rule 2010.

B. I also consent to the imposition of the following sanctions:

- a ten (10) business day suspension from association with any FINRA registered firm in any capacity; and
- A \$5,000 fine.

I agree to pay the monetary sanction upon notice that this AWC has been accepted and that such payment(s) are due and payable. I have submitted an Election of Payment form showing the method by which I propose to pay the fine imposed.

I specifically and voluntarily waive any right to claim that I am unable to pay, now or at any time hereafter, the monetary sanction(s) imposed in this matter.

I understand that if I am barred or suspended from associating with any FINRA member, I become subject to a statutory disqualification as that term is defined in Article III, Section 4 of FINRA's By-Laws, incorporating Section 3(a)(39) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Accordingly, I may not be associated with any FINRA member in any capacity, including clerical or ministerial functions, during the period of the bar or suspension (see FINRA Rules 8310 and 8311)

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

II.

WAIVER OF PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

I specifically and voluntarily waive the following rights granted under FINRA's Code of Procedure:

- A. To have a Complaint issued specifying the allegations against me;

- 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, I specifically and voluntarily waive any right to claim bias or prejudgment of the Chief Legal Officer, 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.

I further specifically and voluntarily waive 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

I understand that:

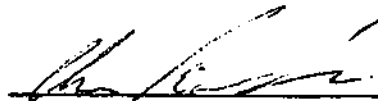
- A. Submission of this AWC is voluntary and will not resolve this matter unless and until it has been reviewed and accepted by the NAC, a Review Subcommittee of the NAC, or the Office of Disciplinary Affairs ("ODA"), pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216;
- B. If this AWC is not accepted, its submission will not be used as evidence to prove any of the allegations against me; and
- C. If accepted:
 - 1. This AWC will become part of my permanent disciplinary record and may be considered in any future actions brought by FINRA or any other regulator against me;

2. This AWC will be made available through FINRA's public disclosure program in accordance with FINRA Rule 8313;
3. FINRA may make a public announcement concerning this agreement and the subject matter thereof in accordance with FINRA Rule 8313; and
4. I 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. I 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 my: (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. I may attach a Corrective Action Statement to this AWC that is a statement of demonstrable corrective steps taken to prevent future misconduct. I understand that I 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.

I certify that I have read and understand all of the provisions of this AWC and have been given a full opportunity to ask questions about it; that I have agreed to its 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 me to submit it.

9/3/15
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

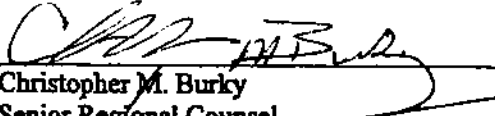

Christopher Paul Richards, Respondent

Reviewed by: 
Michael Gilmore, Esq.
Counsel for Respondent
Moss & Gilmore, LLP
129 Third Street
Mineola, New York 11501
516-739-9009

Accepted by FINRA:

9/24/15
Date

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


Christopher M. Burky
Senior Regional Counsel
FINRA Department of Enforcement
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