This Week in Wall Street Reform | Sept. 23 - 29, 2017

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WELLS FARGO — THE LATEST

Wells Fargo fighting order to rehire whistleblower I American Banker
Wells Fargo is extending a 6-year-old fight with a sham-accounts whistleblower, despite a government order to immediately reinstate the former employee…

"They really want to be unaccountable," said Amanda Werner, campaign manager of **Americans for Financial Reform** and Public Citizen, which has been pressing Congress to hold new hearings into the phony-accounts scandal after the bank raised its estimate for how many customers were affected.

Waters calls for Wells Fargo's charter to be revoked I PoliticoPro

House report on CFPB's Wells Fargo investigation is no smoking gun I American Banker
"I have a difficult time believing that the group that wants to disband the only consumer watchdog group in the banking industry is truly concerned about the failure to properly monitor Wells Fargo," said Richard McCune, a partner at the law firm McCune Wright Arevalo.

EQUIFAX — THE LATEST

Equifax CEO Richard Smith Is Out After Huge Data Breach I NY Times
The chairman and chief executive of Equifax, Richard F. Smith, retired on Tuesday in the aftermath of a major data breach that exposed the personal information of as many as 143 million people, the credit reporting agency said.

Equifax said Paulino do Rego Barros Jr., most recently the president of its Asia-Pacific region, had been appointed interim chief executive. The company said it planned to conduct a search for a new chief executive and would consider candidates from inside and outside the company.

IRS bill could reduce need for Equifax, other credit bureaus I American Banker
A senior House lawmaker plans to reintroduce legislation as early as Thursday requiring the IRS to fast-track the income verification process, which proponents say could help reduce the financial industry's dependence on credit bureaus.

As heads continue to roll in the wake of the Equifax breach, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., said his bill would be a step up from how lenders currently verify a potential borrower's financial data.

“We need to get away from relying so heavily on the credit bureaus,” McHenry said in an interview. "We need to modernize the way lenders verify identity. And a huge component of that is income verification and making that process much more seamless than it currently is.”

Outrage Over Equifax Data Breach Revealed in New Survey I Credit Union Times
This poll conducted over a three-day span, from September 20-22, 2017, revealed several key data points:

- 84.20% heard of the Equifax cyberbreach.
- 55.11% have not checked to see if they were hacking victims.
- 26.48% planned on joining a class action lawsuit against Equifax, 46.32% are unsure.
- 83.01% either “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” that lawmakers should enact stricter legislation and oversight to protect consumer credit information.
- Of the 842 poll participants that heard of the Equifax breach, 54.16% believe that Equifax should lose its ability to act as a credit bureau

Equifax Breach Reminds Us Why We Need The 7th Amendment I Law 360 (Jean Sternlight)

Fixing the Equifax Problem: Public Utility Regulation of Credit Reporting I Huffington Post (Adam Levitin)
Why was Equifax so cavalier about protecting consumer data? And why in the wake of the data breach has it been so inept in helping consumers who are trying to protect themselves from identity theft? The answer is simple: Equifax has no reason to care about consumers. Equifax’s customers are businesses, not consumers. Equifax competes primarily with Experian and Transunion to get business from the lenders, insurers, and employers who use credit reports.

NY State official confirms Equifax subpoena, seeks more regulatory power I PoliticoPro

3 weeks later, Equifax makes a peace offering I NY Times

Equifax creates free credit freeze service after massive hack I PoliticoPro

Fallout from Equifax breach will hit banks hardest I American Banker
While consumers are understandably worried about fraud and identity theft, it is financial institutions that will ultimately be on the hook for any loans they make to identity thieves… As a result of that risk, banks will have to institute stricter authentication procedures.

While some lenders may choose to experiment with new ways to authenticate consumers, such as using biometric information, in most cases lenders will likely interpret “better authentication” as requiring more data from consumers to help ensure that the applicant is indeed who he says he is. For example, lenders may ask consumers to respond to more out-of-wallet questions during the application process that are more difficult for an identity thief to answer, like, “What is your mortgage payment?” or “Did you own a certain type of car?”

Why the Equifax data breach may impact your right to sue financial firms I Akron Beacon Journal
The CFPB's arbitration rule went into effect Sept. 18. But the Senate may have until November to vote, according to the press office for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. So consumers have time to put in their two cents.

Amanda Werner, campaign manager with **Americans for Financial Reform**, suggests writing a letter or calling your senator. Consider discussing how mandatory arbitration could affect your ability to solve problems with the company supplying your savings account or credit card.

Equifax fallout underscores need to defend consumer access to trial by jury I USA Today (Morris Pearl and David Newville)
It is common for many companies - cable TV companies, cell phone providers, etc., - to have clauses in their agreements (those long agreements consumers sign off on without ever reading) specifying you will never have the right to sue them. By using their services and signing over your information, you can never sue them, even if you were wronged.From our years of experience – one of us was a former executive at the world's largest asset manager and the other leads the federal policy work of an organization that protects consumers – we know that arbitration forums rule in favor of companies much more often than in favor of consumers for a variety of reasons, and other than a few bad days of PR, companies have very little at stake in arbitration.

How the Equifax data breach could change arbitration laws I Bankrate
The U.S. House of Representatives in July voted to repeal the rule. But chances of the rule dying in the Senate may have shrunk. Here's a look at what could happen and how you can weigh in.

CFPB AND CONSUMER FINANCE

Credit rating firms should prepare for 'new regime,' Cordray warns I Washington Post
"We're going to have monitoring in place that's preventive," Richard Cordray, the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, said in an interview with CNBC. "It's going to be a different regime than we're used to. In the past they dealt with these problems on their own. … That's not good enough." The big three credit bureaus — Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian — collect information on 200 million consumers but have traditionally only been federally regulated by the Federal Trade Commission. In 2010s financial reform legislation, the Dodd Frank Act, the CFPB gained the power to supervise the companies on a day-to-day basis.

Senate Poised to Repeal New Rule Allowing Consumer Class Actions I NY Times

Chamber of Commerce suing to block rule letting consumers sue their banks I Washington Post
Wall Street had hoped Congress would squash the rule before it went into effect later this year. Republicans in the House passed legislation to block the rule this summer, but the Senate has struggled to take up a similar bill. With tax reform now taking up much of lawmakers' attention, opportunities to push through the measure in time are dwindling, industry officials have said.

“This baseless legal challenge is a desperate move after their Senate repeal effort ran into massive resistance this week,” Amanda Werner, arbitration campaign manager for **Americans for Financial Reform** and Public Citizen, said in a statement.

Real Protection for Consumers I Hazlton Pa. Standard-Speaker
Equifax’s failure to protect its computer system allowed hackers to obtain the personal financial information of 143 million Americans from the credit-rating company. Now Republicans in Congress are rushing to the aid of ... Equifax, by shielding it from lawsuits resulting from the data breach.

Chamber of Commerce Files Lawsuit to Stop American Consumers From Being Able to File Lawsuits I Consumerist (Chris Morran)
The U.S. Chamber of Commerce may sound like a government agency or a quaint organization of helpful business leaders, but it is, in fact, the single largest lobbying organization in the country, spending nearly $104 million last year alone on lobbying, about $40 million more than any other group. The Chamber also thinks the U.S. Constitution is mistaken, that the Sixth and Seventh Amendments don’t apply to consumers; that the mere fact you are a customer should strip you of your constitutional right to sue banks like Wells Fargo or credit bureaus like Equifax when they open millions of bogus accounts in customers’ names or fail to protect sensitive information for more than 100 million people.

And how does the Chamber of Commerce plan to stop the American people from being able to bring lawsuits? By doing the one thing it doesn’t want you to be able to do.

GOP Senators Don’t Yet Have Votes to Overturn Critical Rule I Intercept

Leahy: Allow Class-Action Lawsuits Against Equifax, Banks I Burlington Free Press

Dems Wield Equifax, Wells Fargo in Fight Over Arbitration I Associated Press

AG Jeff Landry Not Protecting Louisiana Consumers I New Orleans Times-Picayune (Imre Szalai)

OCC Finds Arbitration Rule Will Significantly Increase Cost of Consumer Credit I PoliticoPro

Trump’s Comptroller Does Bidding of Former Clients with Sham Arbitration Report I Allied Progress

We must fight for our 7th Amendment rights I The Hill (Chuck Muth)

Trott debt collection bill draws consumer groups’ ire I Detroit News
Legislation proposed by U.S. Rep. Dave Trott is drawing the ire of consumer groups who say it would allow attorneys and law firms to sidestep federal law barring abusive debt-collection practices such as making false threats and pressuring people to pay debts they don’t actually owe.

Brian Marshall, policy counsel for the advocacy group **Americans for Financial Reform**, said one of the reasons Congress adopted the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act in 1977 was empowering consumers to sue to enforce their rights under the law. “You can file a bar complaint against a lawyer, but it’s not like you could take a lawyer to court to get compensation or relief from the wrongdoing,” Marshall said.

Supporters of CFPB Arbitration Rule Fear Senate May Move to Nullify It This Week I Credit Union Times

Equifax and Wells Fargo reveal what's offensively wrong with forced arbitration I NY Daily News (Ali Naini)
In response to this egregious failure to safeguard the data in its possession, Equifax offered one year of "free" credit monitoring to consumers — but only if they waived their right to sue Equifax in class-action suits, and agreed to arbitration instead, for claims involving the credit monitoring service. How's that for atonement?

400 scholars say you should be able to sue Equifax and other financial institutions I MarketWatch
Some 423 law school, university and college professors are sending a letter to two senators, encouraging them to support a rule the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has passed.

The CFPB announced a final version of the rule in July that would ban companies from putting “mandatory arbitration clauses” in their contracts, language that prohibits consumers from bringing class-action suits against them. It applies to institutions that sell financial products, including bank accounts and credit cards.

Preserve consumers’ right to sue I Columbus Dispatch (editorial)
Arbitration is a fine way to resolve a dispute, when both parties agree to it and the playing field is level. When it is forced, because one side is essentially compelled into signing away all other options, it’s a quick route to abuse. Consumer groups are right to push back against the Trump administration’s move to undo yet another Obama-era attempt to protect ordinary people from powerful corporations.

Equifax Data Breach Adds Fuel To Fight Over Binding Arbitration I Forbes (Jim Henry)
Supporters of the CFPB say binding arbitration denies consumers their “day in court.” The recent Equifax data breach added fuel to the fire, since consumer advocate groups such as **Americans for Financial Reform** say that binding arbitration would prevent consumers from filing a class action suit in the matter.

Senate Republicans Plan to Sneakily Gut Major Consumer Protection Rule I The Intercept (David Dayen, Ryan Grim)
In the middle of a consequential week for the future of American health care, Senate Republicans are hoping to sneak through a controversial nullification of a key rule from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau...

“This rush toward a vote in the Senate is a cynical attempt to roll back an important consumer protection before anyone gets straight answers from Equifax and Wells Fargo about the damage they've done to the financial lives of millions of Americans," said Lisa Donner, executive director of **Americans for Financial Reform**.

On arbitration see **Consumers Union statement**, **AARP letter**, and **joint letter from consumer groups.**

Also see National Consumer Law Center issue brief, **"Servicemembers, Veterans, and Forced Arbitration,"** and Economic Policy Institute report, **"The growing use of mandatory arbitration"**

'Fintechs tend to march to their own rules': former SEC chair Levitt I American Bank

Congress puts Montana's payday lending law at risk I Billings Gazette (Katie Sutton)
Montanans have some of the best protections against payday and other abusive loans in the country, and we fought hard to get there. In 2010, we voted not to let lenders charge more than 36 percent interest; we decided to push predatory loans out of our state. Montanans have saved an estimated $37 million per year from leaving our pocketbooks and our state with this victory…

Payday lending lobbyists have been in Washington pushing other federal agencies, like the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of the Comptroller of Currency, to loosen guidelines that prevent banks from offering payday loans. If these guidelines were loosened, banks like Wells Fargo (the largest bank to previously offer these types of loans) would be able to help payday lenders disregard our Montana laws, and the Consumer Bureau would provide Montanans our only defense against predatory loans. I hope that the FDIC and OCC don't allow payday lenders to partner with banks to break our state's laws.

Perhaps even worse, in early September, a majority in the U.S. House chose to side with America's legalized loan sharks. Rep. Greg Gianforte joined others in voting in favor of a special carve-out in the appropriations bill that would prevent the Consumer Bureau from enforcing the law and responding to the complaints of consumers.

Church Leaders Seek Cap on Payday Loans I Daytona Times
Religious leaders Tuesday called on the Florida Constitution Revision Commission to move forward with a proposed constitutional amendment that would put a 30 percent annual interest-rate cap on "payday" loans.

Main Line payday pioneer faces trial on racketeering charges I Philadelphia Inquirer
Charles Hallinan faces the biggest threat yet to his future and that of the multibillion-dollar industry he helped to create — a racketeering trial that could send him to prison and label the widely copied business practices he pioneered as violations of federal law.

South Dakota forgives payday lending debt with ruling on Dollar Loan Center I Argus Leader

DERIVATIVES, COMMODITIES AND THE CFTC

Regulator Wants Financial Industry to Self-Report Wrongdoing I NY Times
After years as a sleepy federal backwater, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission became one of Wall Street's most aggressive watchdogs during the Barack Obama administration.

Now the agency — which is responsible for policing a broad swath of markets and financial machinery, from trading in commodities to digital currencies to the complex derivatives that helped torpedo the financial system in 2008 — is shifting its law enforcement strategy: It will increasingly look to banks and other financial institutions to come clean on their own about misconduct and problems in the market.

CFTC names new clearing and risk division director I PoliticoPro

GAO: Banks held $10.5T in potentially risky derivatives after rule change I PoliticoPro
A rollback of the so-called swaps pushout rule allowed four large banks to retain $10.5 trillion in derivatives contracts in federally insured parts of their operations as of September 2016, a new report from the Government Accountability Office found...

After the change, Bank of America, Citi, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase pushed out an estimated $265 billion of swaps in notional value, compared to $10.5 trillion that they kept in their insured divisions.

"Today's report largely confirms our own investigative findings: the 2014 repeal of this Dodd-Frank provision was a massive giveaway to a few big banks, letting them hold onto more than $10 trillion — that's trillion with a T — of risky assets," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), who requested the report in 2015. "And it leaves taxpayers potentially holding the bag if things go bad."

House sends ETF research bill to Trump's desk I PoliticoPro

ENFORCEMENT

Deutsche Bank To Pay $190M In Forex Rigging Deal I Law360

Fed fines HSBC $175M for unsafe, unsound FX trading practices I PoliticoPro

FEDERAL RESERVE

Trump meets with Warsh, Cohn and Powell as he steps up search for Fed chair I PoliticoPro

INVESTOR PROTECTION AND THE SEC

New Skirmish in an Old Battle: Wall Street vs. the Customer I NY Times (Gretchen Morgenson)
A corrosive custom forced on investors is finally getting the ax under new regulations in Europe. Too bad some on Wall Street are working overtime to ensure that United States investors don't get the same deal.

The rule change governs how investors pay for brokerage-firm research. This may seem like a mundane administrative matter, but given the conflicts embedded in the process, it is not.

SEC chief: Full extent of data breach not known I The Hill
The chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission on Tuesday said it would take "substantial" time to determine the full scope a 2016 cybersecurity breach that may have allowed hackers to profit from insider information. Jay Clayton testified to the Senate Banking Committee one week after revealing that hackers had breached the SEC's EDGAR corporate filing system, a key hub for financial information. The intruders accessed information from corporate disclosures that are not public.

SEC Rules to Protect Investors From Cyberthreats Fall Short I NY Times (Gretchen Morgenson)
The lapse at the S.E.C. and the breach before it at Equifax, the credit monitoring agency, should both be wake-up calls for investors who regularly trade stocks. In fact, these breakdowns raise questions about significant gaps in the S.E.C.'s computer security rules for stock exchanges and certain other significant trading platforms. As a result of these holes, investors' trades on certain venues may be more vulnerable to hacking than on others. And because of the interconnectedness of the technologies supporting the nation's stock trading systems, hackers gaining access to one venue could easily disrupt entire swaths of the market.

Warren Says SEC's Clayton Puts Interests of Bankers Over Average Investors I Roll Call

SEC hack prompts senators to push for delay in stock market surveillance tool I PoliticoPro

House sends ETF research bill to Trump's desk I PoliticoPro
A bill to allow investment banks to write research reports about exchange-traded funds, a popular investment product, passed the House of Representatives on Wednesday and now heads to the White House...

The legislation, which was lobbied for by Bank of America, Ameriprise Financial and others, directs the SEC to establish a "safe harbor" for ETF reports published by brokers… Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) initially opposed the bill but included an amendment that limited its scope somewhat.

First created in the early 1990s, ETFs are baskets of stocks, bonds or other assets that derive value from the underlying securities. They have exploded in popularity because they typically have low fees, offer investors asset diversity and can easily be bought and sold.

MORTGAGES AND HOUSING

Mortgage Firms 'Churning' Refinance Loans to Veterans l Wall St. Journal
A government agency is targeting lenders who aggressively push military veterans to refinance their home loans, leading the borrowers in some cases to rack up thousands of dollars in unnecessary fees.

Ginnie Mae, the government-owned corporation that guarantees certain mortgage securities, said it is planning to discuss with at least half a dozen lenders their refinance practices. It is also contemplating civil legal action against some lenders, and recently has formed a "Lender Abuse Task Force" with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Share of mortgage lending to lower-income borrowers shrinks l PoliticoPro

Fannie and Freddie make $5.1 billion payment to Treasury l PoliticoPro

Duffy, Cleaver form working group to overhaul Fannie-Freddie l PoliticoPro

Warren presses for information on Fannie-Freddie capital l PoliticoPro

REGULATION IN GENERAL

Trump to outline more plans for deregulation in speech l Washington Post

The Value of Public Participation in Rulemaking l Regulatory Review (Eugene Scalia)

Cost-Benefit Analysis and Reasoned Agency Decision-Making l Regulatory Review (Eugene Scalia)

RETIREMENT INVESTMENT AND DOL FIDUCIARY RULE

Do you really want states to take the lead on fiduciary? l Investment News (editorial)
The Trump administration's proposed delay in the implementation of key parts of the Labor Department's fiduciary rule, and possible elimination of them, has opened a can of worms for the financial services industry. Those segments of the industry wishing the administration would simply do away with the DOL's rule might be sorry if their wish is granted.

That's because multistate brokers and financial advisers could be forced to deal with a fruit salad of different state regulations, each defining who is a fiduciary in different terms, while smaller firms might have to live with tight fiduciary standards for the first time.

Fear Looms DOL Rule Will Kill Centers of Influence Deals l Financial Advisor

Sponsors More Focused on Their Fiduciary Responsibilities l Plan Sponsor

[How Advisors Can Cope With Pricing Pressure In A Fiduciary Era](#) **I Wealth Management**

Wagner introduces bill to kill DOL fiduciary rule I Investment News

Rep. Ann Wagner: Fiduciary Rule Would 'Exacerbate' Savings Crisis I PJ Media

STUDENT LOANS AND FOR-PROFIT SCHOOLS

DeVos Says Defrauded Students Are After 'Free Money' I Huffington Post (David Halperin)
Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who has blatantly abandoned federal protections for students and taxpayers in swiftly enacting the agenda of the predatory for-profit college industry, added insult to injury on Friday, declaring that under the rules adopted under the Obama administration, "all one had to do was raise his or her hands to be entitled to so-called free money."

DeVos, speaking at the Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference in Michigan, was, based on the Detroit News account of the speech, referencing the Obama Department of Education's "borrower defense" rule, which implements a long-standing federal law giving defrauded students the right to have their federal loans cancelled. DeVos has put that Obama rule on hold, along with other reforms implemented after revelations of shocking abuses by for-profit colleges — using deceptive and coercive recruiting tactics, overcharging, underspending on instruction, lying to government oversight agencies, and defrauding taxpayers of billions of dollars.

DeVos should keep rules targeting for-profit colleges I Denver Post (editorial)
For-profit colleges have their place in higher education, but too many operators have proved to be incredibly bad actors over the years, making reasonable rules meant to protect students the smart play.

During the Obama presidency, the Department of Education put in place regulations that its new secretary, Betsy DeVos, has stalled and appears to be preparing to scrap. We hope her new group of rule-makers considering the Obama-era guardrails sees their benefit.

University of Phoenix Phasing Out Campuses I Phoenix Times
The best-known for-profit university will phase out on-campus enrollment and teaching at around 20 locations, according to employees and internal discussions. The locations in question include full-fledged campuses in Detroit, Tucson, El Paso, and Albuquerque, along with smaller learning centers in San Bernardino and Woodlands, Texas.

The University of Phoenix's external affairs department confirmed that as of Friday, the university "is instituting a teach-out phase at several of our campus and learning center locations."

SYSTEMIC RISK

Answering the multi-trillion-dollar question on bank regulation I The Hill (Stephen Haber & Ross Levine)
Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and many others argue that the regulatory response to the 2008 financial crisis in the form of the Dodd-Frank Act has burdened banks with costly regulations that slow growth and hurt American workers.

What set of policies might the Trump administration promote to enhance efficiency without exposing the economy to another crisis?

Both before the 2008 crisis and still today, incentives for excessive risk-taking are baked into the compensation schemes of bank executives. Most large financial institutions reward executives with bonuses if stock prices rise, but executives never pay a penalty, "a negative bonus," if things go badly.

AIG escapes SIFI designation I PoliticoPro

U.S. Is Said to Plan Freeing AIG From Systemic-Risk Designation I Bloomberg

Fed, FDIC take first step toward two-year living will cycle I PoliticoPro

Regionals hopeful over bipartisan Senate bill to raise SIFI level I American Banker
A bipartisan Senate bill could give regional banks hope that they may eventually be able to shed the systemically important financial institution designation that subjects those with more than $50 billion of assets to tougher regulatory requirements.

The bill, introduced Thursday, is being sponsored by Sens. David Perdue, R-Ga., and Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., and mirrors legislation introduced in the House by Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer, R-Mo., that has 29 Republican and 13 Democratic co-sponsors.

It would remove the $50 billion asset threshold established by the Dodd-Frank Act and replace it with an indicator test that focuses on measures including size, interconnectedness, cross-border activities and complexity. The Federal Reserve Board uses a similar calculation to determine the risk a bank poses.

Brown sees compromise on banking regs coming soon I PoliticoPro

See ICBA letter signed by more than 10,000 community-bank employees.

TAXES

What Awaits Wall Street in Trump Tax Plan I Wall St. Journal
Morgan Stanley Chief Executive James Gorman said at an industry conference in June that a 25% corporate tax rate would lift his bank's earnings by 15%, assuming no changes to the business mix. The Trump framework calls for a 20% rate, so the benefit could be even greater.

Citigroup Inc. has said that a cut to a 25% rate plus a tax holiday on foreign earnings would have boosted its annual net income by $800 million, or by about 5%. It would also improve the bank's return on equity by more than 1 percentage point, estimated John McDonald, an analyst at Sanford Bernstein…

Smaller banks could also reap bigger gains since they have relatively high effective tax rates and businesses that are almost purely domestic, Evercore ISI analysts said in a note. A potential tax cut from 35% to 28% could boost 2018 earnings for regional banks by a median 9%, they said.

Billionaires Demand More Tax Breaks! I AFR Blog

See **statement by Take on Wall Street Campaign.**

Cohn Says Trump Is Committed to Ending Carried Interest 'Loophole' I Bloomberg

A tax plan that works for the people, not Wall Street I The Hill (Richard Trumka)

OTHER TOPICS

Trump's Change of Heart Puts $1 Trillion Building Plan in Limbo I Bloomberg
Donald Trump's infrastructure guru spent part of Sept. 26 at a conference in Washington promoting the president's $1 trillion plan to rebuild the nation's crumbling roads, bridges and airports relying in part on public-private partnerships. The same day, across town, Trump was telling lawmakers that those kinds of deals don't work.

Trump's remarks, relayed by three lawmakers after a closed meeting with Republicans and Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee, raised new questions about how the plan would be financed, and whether the president was instead considering increasing federal funding for building projects -- a prospect made harder by the large tax cut the administration proposed Wednesday.

To Address Inequality, Let's Take on Monopolies I Inequality.org (Barry Lynn and Kevin Carty)
Most Americans know that our country has become extremely unequal. They may not know that the richest 0.1% of Americans own as much wealth as the bottom 90%, or that the richest one percent took more than half of all income growth since 1979. But they know that the rich benefit more and more nowadays, while middle and working class families take home less and less.

Our team at the Open Markets Institute is dedicated to investigating and publicizing the radical concentrations of wealth — and of power — that are responsible for creating much of this extreme inequality. Through investigative journalism and historical and legal research we have shown that monopoly power is at the root of many of the most pressing injustices in America today—including degraded jobs, depressed entrepreneurship, financial instability, and the weakening of the economic and social fabric of communities all across the country.