

Friday, December 10, 2021  
To: New York Community Banks:

## FROM ICBA

### ICBA backs bill to extend CBLR relief

ICBA [expressed support](#) for legislation to allow federal banking regulators to implement a community bank leverage ratio of 8-8.5% through 2024.

**Background:** As required by the CARES Act, the agencies lowered the CBLR to 8% in 2020 and 8.5% in 2021, with a 9% rate scheduled to resume next year.

**The Bill:** The Community Bank Relief Act (H.R. 6145), introduced by Rep. Tracey Mann (R-Kan.), is designed to stave off a lending contraction amid the ongoing disruption of the pandemic.

**ICBA Support:** In its letter of support, ICBA noted that large deposit holdings due to pandemic relief measures continue to justify CBLR relief, with community bank balances more than doubling between the end of 2019 and mid-year 2021.

**More:** ICBA has asked the FDIC [to extend](#) the 8.5% CBLR requirement and to [permanently raise](#) audit and reporting requirement asset thresholds. FDIC Chairman Jelena McWilliams [responded](#) that the agency is exploring whether to extend audit and reporting relief while it engages other regulators on additional CBLR flexibility.

### Recording of 1071 grassroots briefing available

Community bankers can access an [on-demand recording](#) of yesterday's ICBA briefing on its campaign targeting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Section 1071 proposal.

**Details:** [The briefing](#) covered the proposed small-business data collection and reporting requirements and ICBA's [comprehensive guide](#) to help community bankers develop, format, and submit personalized comments.

**ICBA Position:** ICBA is strongly advocating a robust community bank exemption and other reforms, as laid out in [ICBA's comment letter guide](#).

### OCC's Hsu encourages banks to explore special-purpose credit programs

Acting Comptroller of the Currency Michael Hsu [encouraged](#) national banks and federal savings associations to explore potential opportunities available through special-purpose credit programs.

**Guidance:** The Department of Housing and Urban Development this week released [guidance](#) clarifying that SPCPs that conform with the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and Regulation B generally do not violate the Federal Fair Housing Act.

**Agency Statements:** Hsu said these programs can open the door to homeownership to communities that have been historically shut out or otherwise disadvantaged. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Rohit Chopra issued a similar [statement](#) earlier this week.

**Background:** A recent [Independent Banker article](#) breaks down SPCPs, their regulatory requirements, and what they mean for community banks.

## FROM OTHER SOURCES

- Initial data from Pfizer suggests two doses of the vaccine don't offer much protection against the rapidly spreading Omicron variant, [but three doses do](#). NIAID Director Anthony Fauci [told CNN](#) "it's going to be a matter of when, not if" the definition of "fully vaccinated" changes from two shots of Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines to three. [Go deeper.](#)
- The FDA authorized a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for 16- and 17-year-olds, giving those teens access to the shots as the Omicron variant spreads worldwide, [Politico reports.](#)

- “Long COVID” is impacting careers and creating economic distress. Many of the nearly 50 million people infected with the [coronavirus](#) [continue to suffer](#) from some persistent symptoms, with a smaller subset experiencing maladies forcing them to drop out of the workforce, abandon careers and rack up huge debts. While hard data is not available and estimates vary, medical specialists said 750,000 to 1.3 million patients likely remain so sick for extended periods that they can’t return to the workforce full time. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/12/09/long-covid-work-unemployed/?mkt\\_tok=ODUwLVRBQS01MTEAAAGBQ33Q9GrDWgArCcK2HpcLyEPHM1-VKxGjgtUMnH5ahYLGZpJglAuRB3qRzqjrPeK\\_DMdOKOxQb\\_WuFRjLQyNi6HpZDUwTt\\_q23auc-8LkKN8E](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/12/09/long-covid-work-unemployed/?mkt_tok=ODUwLVRBQS01MTEAAAGBQ33Q9GrDWgArCcK2HpcLyEPHM1-VKxGjgtUMnH5ahYLGZpJglAuRB3qRzqjrPeK_DMdOKOxQb_WuFRjLQyNi6HpZDUwTt_q23auc-8LkKN8E)
- Companies of all sizes are rethinking their plans to send workers back to the office as the [new omicron variant](#) adds another layer of uncertainty. [https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-lifestyle-health-937d4c71e44781cf1d25ce6b56141eb0?user\\_email=&utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=MorningWire\\_Dec10&utm\\_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers](https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-lifestyle-health-937d4c71e44781cf1d25ce6b56141eb0?user_email=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=MorningWire_Dec10&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers)

### FROM NEW YORK

- Gov. Hochul this morning announced that effective Monday (December 13), mask wearing will be required in indoor public places in New York State, unless the business or venue has a vaccine requirement for entry. The policy will be re-evaluated Jan. 15 "based on current conditions." Hochul's statement noted the move was made due to cases and hospitalizations rising in New York: "We shouldn't have reached the point where we are confronted with a winter surge, especially with the vaccine at our disposal, and I share many New Yorkers' frustration that we are not past this pandemic yet." Read the Governor's statement: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-major-action-address-winter-surge-and-prevent-business-disruption>
- Gov. Hochul gave a COVID-19 briefing Thursday afternoon to update New Yorkers on the COVID-19 pandemic, and called current COVID-19 rates an “an alarm going off.” New York State has an average of 49.83 cases per 100,000 on a seven-day average, up from 34 per 100,000 just two weeks ago. 30,772,072 total doses had been administered, including 138,694 total over the previous 24 hours; 91.9% of New Yorkers 18 and older had at least one dose, and 81.2% of New were fully vaccinated; 73.2% of New Yorkers 12-17 had at least one dose, and 64.6% of New Yorkers were fully vaccinated; 20% of New Yorkers 5-11 had at least one dose, and 5.8% were fully vaccinated. The Governor also presented seven-day averages of new cases per 100,000 by region. <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/new-york-state/watch-live-gov-hochul-updates-new-yorkers-on-covid-19-pandemic-4/>
- NYS Attorney General Tish James [got out of the governor’s race](#) yesterday, scarcely [six weeks after she got into it](#) -- and instead will seek reelection to her current position, a massive shift in the Democratic gubernatorial primary landscape. [Politico New York reports](#). What does this mean for Gov. Hochul, Jumaane Williams, Tom Suozzi and Bill de Blasio? *City & State* notes: [Here’s our rundown of who is and isn’t running for governor](#).
- [New York has the third-highest unemployment rate](#) in the country, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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**IBANYS will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available. Thank you all for your continued participation and support.**

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