I support a delay in the implementation of the DOL Fiduciary Rule to allow the new administration time to determine if goals came be met via the new guidelines. I fully agree more people in our industry need to be held to a much higher standard. I am frustrated constantly by the advertising life insurance agents get away with when selling index annuities, while the same ad would garner a huge fine when aired by a registered representative. How the industry has allowed minimally licensed insurance agents the ability to un-sell mutual funds (which they are un-licensed to sell) while selling for big commissions annuities? I hope some version of this new law will put an end to this practice.

I don’t believe the enforcement of the fiduciary rule centered on “fees” has any merit. I find it quite hypocritical that our Government believes it can enforce a standard of “do what’s in the best interest of your client”, when it can’t follow this goal itself. My clients are constantly given faulty information at the Social Security office, are subject to the lowest fee provider of federal employee retirement advice which results in irreparable damage when they elect to turn down survivor benefits at retirement. The federal Thrift Savings Plan was three years late to the Roth TSP game, any military member in the combat zone from 2006 through 2009 would have been better off in the highest fee ROTH IRA vs traditional TSP.

Doing what is in a client’s best interest demands thorough knowledge of financial planning concepts: taxes, insurance, employee benefits and investments. We won’t have meaningful change until we demand knowledge and then design enforcement around it. The federal TSP is the lowest cost 401K in America, but as noted earlier is not always what is in the client’s best interest. Federal long term care insurance program is the best traditional long term care available but that didn’t stop members of Congress demanding an inquiry when rates were increased in 2016. These members pretending to “look out” for their constituents (which gets return votes) probably helped many people to drop or never apply for the best coverage available (did they act in a fiduciary manner).
I believe many people in this industry attempt to do the right thing but they don’t work hard enough to know what that is most of the time. I am convinced most members of congress would fail my Financial Planning 101 test, I believe 50% of the folks that created this rule would fail as well. How in the world can folks ignorant of financial planning propose to regulate it? Change is necessary, just not this change. I am happy to be part of the solution, maybe with President Trump in the game folks in Washington will begin to look outside of DC for fresh ideas.

For the record, then Congresswoman Thelma Drake drafted ROTH TSP legislation after listening to my case for it. We helped clients maximize Social Security years before the industry figured out the strategies and Congress shut them down. We know current CSRS employees have the biggest tax loophole in America in the Voluntary Contribution Plan rolling to Roth IRA. We can be a resource to get this right but folks need reach out to us, we can help!

Regards,

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