

**FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, WAIVER, AND CONSENT
NO. 2022076254001**

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

RE: Marc Barton (Respondent)
General Securities Representative
CRD No. 2937356

Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216, Respondent Marc Barton 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 Respondent alleging violations based on the same factual findings described in this AWC.

I.

ACCEPTANCE AND CONSENT

- A. Respondent accepts and consents to the following findings by FINRA without admitting or denying them:

BACKGROUND

Barton first joined the securities industry in 1997. From 1997 to 2017, Barton was registered with FINRA through his association with several different member firms. In May 2017, Barton associated with LPL Financial LLC as a General Securities Representative. On September 13, 2022, LPL filed a Uniform Termination Notice of Securities Industry Registration (Form U5) terminating Barton's registration for, among other things, submitting "account documents to Firm containing re-used customer signatures and modified documents after signed by customer." Since September 2022, Barton has been registered with FINRA through his association with another member firm.

OVERVIEW

From May 2017 to February 2022, Barton forged or falsified the signatures of 32 customers on 48 documents by reusing customer signatures and altered six additional documents after they were signed by six different customers. Therefore, Barton violated FINRA Rules 2010 and 4511.

FACTS AND VIOLATIVE CONDUCT

This matter originated from FINRA's receipt of the Form U5 dated September 13, 2022 referenced above.

FINRA Rule 2010 states that “a member, in the conduct of its business, shall observe high standards of commercial honor and just and equitable principles of trade.” Forgery occurs when one person signs or affixes another person’s name or initials on a document without the other person’s prior permission. Forgery is a violation of FINRA Rule 2010.

Falsifying documents occurs when a person creates a document or entry in a firm’s system that creates a false appearance by including altered or untrue information. Signing or affixing another person’s name to a document with the other person’s prior permission but without indicating that it is being done on someone else’s behalf is falsification. Falsification is also a violation of FINRA Rule 2010.

FINRA Rule 4511 requires members to “make and preserve books and records as required under the FINRA rules, the Exchange Act and the applicable Exchange Act rules.” Exchange Act Rule 17a-3 requires firms to maintain records of brokerage accounts. Inherent in the obligation to make and preserve books and records is the requirement that they be accurate. A registered representative who forges or falsifies firm records causes the firm to maintain inaccurate records and, thereby, violates FINRA Rule 4511. A violation of FINRA Rule 4511 is also a violation of FINRA Rule 2010.

From May 2017 to February 2022, Barton reused the signatures of 32 customers on a total of 48 documents, including the signatures of seven customers on twelve documents without the customers’ prior permission. The documents, which included new account applications, money transfer forms, and securities purchase documents, were required books and records of the firm. All of the transactions were authorized and none of the customers complained. In addition, Barton altered six documents after they were signed by six different customers. Barton also falsely attested on five annual compliance questionnaires that he had not signed or affixed another person’s signature on a document.

Therefore, Barton violated FINRA Rules 4511 and 2010.

B. Respondent also consents to the imposition of the following sanctions:

- a four-month suspension from associating with any FINRA member in all capacities; and
- a \$5,000 fine.

Respondent agrees to pay the monetary sanction upon notice that this AWC has been accepted and that such payment is due and payable. Respondent has submitted an Election of Payment form showing the method by which he proposes to pay the fine imposed.

Respondent specifically and voluntarily waives any right to claim an inability to pay, now or at any time after the execution of this AWC, the monetary sanction imposed in this matter.

Respondent understands that if he is barred or suspended from associating with any FINRA member, he becomes 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, he 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 in this AWC shall be effective on a date set by FINRA.

II.

WAIVER OF PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

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

- A. To have a complaint issued specifying the allegations against him;
- 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, Respondent specifically and voluntarily waives 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 its acceptance or rejection.

Respondent 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

Respondent 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 Respondent; and
- C. If accepted:
 - 1. this AWC will become part of Respondent's permanent disciplinary record and may be considered in any future action brought by FINRA or any other regulator against Respondent;
 - 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 its subject matter in accordance with FINRA Rule 8313; and
 - 4. Respondent 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. Respondent 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 Respondent's right to take legal or factual positions in litigation or other legal proceedings in which FINRA is not a party. Nothing in this provision affects Respondent's testimonial obligations in any litigation or other legal proceedings.
- D. Respondent may attach a corrective action statement to this AWC that is a statement of demonstrable corrective steps taken to prevent future misconduct. Respondent understands that he 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.

Respondent certifies that he has read and understands all of the provisions of this AWC and has been given a full opportunity to ask questions about it; Respondent understands and acknowledges that FINRA does not represent or advise him and Respondent cannot rely on FINRA for legal advice. Respondent has agreed to the AWC's provisions voluntarily; and no offer, threat, inducement, or promise of any kind, other than the terms set forth in this AWC and the prospect of avoiding the issuance of a complaint, has been made to induce him to submit this AWC.

August 14, 2024

Date



Marc Barton
Respondent

Accepted by FINRA:

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

August 15, 2024

Date



Jessica Zetwick-Skryzhynskyy
Director
FINRA
Department of Enforcement
9509 Key West Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850