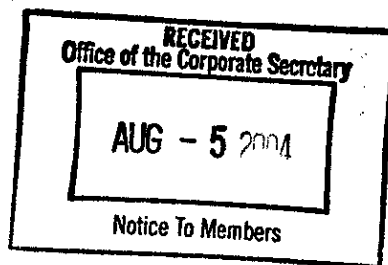


July 30, 2004



Barbara Z. Sweeney
NASD
Office of the Corporate Secretary
1735 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006-1500

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

I have been a licensed insurance professional and variable product salesperson for over 27 years. I have seen many changes occur in my industry in this time period. Most were of benefit due to technological advances and needs of the times. Some have not been. This is the purpose of my letter to you and your colleagues.

I am writing to you because the **redundant disclosure and suitability standards** contained in NASD's proposal to impose specific suitability and disclosure requirements on the sale of variable annuities are unnecessary. They will provide no meaningful protection to consumers, and will impact my business. I urge you to withdraw the proposal.

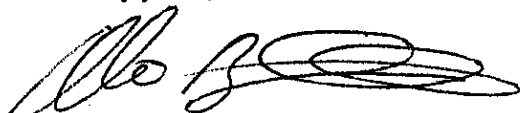
I firmly believe that people who engage in misleading sales practices should be aggressively prosecuted and subject to meaningful sanctions.

However, your proposal would duplicate requirements that are already in place. NASD rules already contain a general suitability rule that applies to all sales of securities, including variable annuities. If regulators really want to protect consumers, appropriate enforcement of the existing suitability rule rather than adopting a new rule is the answer.

Likewise, variable annuity prospectuses, which are already reviewed by the SEC, already discuss the fees, risks and expenses associated with variable annuities. Requiring a separate "risk disclosure document" would duplicate information already found in the prospectus and reduce the likelihood that consumers will read the most important source of information on the product — the prospectus. What you folks at NASD need to concentrate on is getting consumers to **READ** the material we, by law and regulation, leave for them to read. I always ask them to read the sales materials, particularly the prospectuses, and note any questions to ask me at our next meeting. Rarely have I been asked. But I still inquire from them any questions that they might have regarding their transactions.

Finally, I believe that the proposal is a "solution in search of a problem" — I do not think the available data supports NASD's claims that the level of sales problems in the variable annuity marketplace calls for the adoption of the proposed rule. For these reasons, I urge NASD withdraw the proposed rule. Thank you for your consideration of my views on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Olin K. Barkdull, CFP, LUTCF

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