

Press Releases

October 10, 1996

OTS 96-66 - Fiechter Lauds Retsinas Appointment: Expresses Hope for Permanent Director

Office of Thrift Supervision

News Release

The Administration is announcing today the appointment of Nicolas Retsinas as interim Director of OTS. Mr. Retsinas is Assistant Secretary for Housing/FHA Commissioner at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He will serve on an interim basis while the Administration seeks a nominee for the Director's position. The following press release is being issued by OTS.

FIECHTER LAUDS RETSINAS APPOINTMENT; EXPRESSES HOPE FOR PERMANENT DIRECTOR

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 9, 1996 -- Jonathan Fiechter, who departed today as acting director of the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), welcomed the appointment of Nicolas Retsinas as interim director of OTS.

Said Fiechter, who starts a new job at the World Bank, "Nick Retsinas has broad knowledge and understanding of the housing industry and the role of the thrift industry in it, and is an excellent choice to lead the agency while the Administration seeks a permanent director."

Fiechter reiterated his hope that a permanent director would soon be nominated. Fiechter took over as acting director in December 1992.

"I believe that the OTS staff and the thrift industry we supervise would benefit greatly from a resolution of the current state of uncertainty regarding the future of the thrift industry and OTS. There has been an implicit presumption since passage of the FIRREA legislation in 1989 that the thrift industry would ultimately disappear. The success of FIRREA in restoring the health of the thrift industry, however, has surprised even the most ardent supporters of FIRREA. The thrift industry, rid of insolvent institutions and high fliers, has experienced a dramatic and sustainable recovery. Despite the fact that the activities of today's thrift industry are concentrated in lower yielding residential mortgage lending, its capital and profitability are at record levels.

"Given the healthy condition of the thrift industry, the sound financial position of OTS and the recent resolution of the SAIF-FICO problems, the industry and the agency have great potential," he said.

"While the thrift charter will come under close scrutiny next year as part of the continuing efforts to modernize the banking and thrift industries, the thrift charter has, in fact, been strengthened by the BIF-SAIF legislation that became law last week and by other recent

legislation. It is my hope that future legislation will build on the progress made to enhance the charters."

In the meantime, Fiechter added, "I am confident the OTS staff will continue to do an outstanding job. The staff has completed the cleanup of the thrift crisis, improved the efficiency of OTS operations and is now working to restructure and simplify regulations governing thrifts," Fiechter declared.

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The Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), a bureau of the U.S. Treasury, regulates and supervises the nation's thrift industry. OTS' mission is to ensure the safety and soundness of thrift institutions and to support their role as home mortgage lenders and providers of other community credit and financial services. For copies of news releases or other documents call PubliFax at 202/906-5660, or visit the OTS web page at www.ots.treas.gov.