

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ATLANTA DIVISION**

JESSE PRATHER and JOHN W.
PRATHER,
on behalf of themselves and all
others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., AND
WELLS FARGO EDUCATION
FINANCIAL SERVICES,

Defendants.

Civil Action File No.

1:15-cv-04231-SCJ

CLASS ACTION

ORDER GRANTING THE MOTION AT DOC. NO. [35]
(1) CONDITIONALLY CERTIFYING A SETTLEMENT CLASS,
(2) PRELIMINARILY APPROVING CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT,
(3) APPROVING NOTICE PLAN, AND (4) SETTING FINAL APPROVAL
HEARING

This matter having come before the Court on Plaintiffs' motion for preliminary approval of the proposed class action settlement of the above-captioned case (the "Action") between Plaintiffs Jesse Prather and John W. Prather, individually and on behalf of the Settlement Class ("Plaintiffs"), and Defendant Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. ("Defendant") as set forth in the Parties' Settlement Agreement and Release (the "Agreement," which memorializes the "Settlement"). Having duly considered the papers, THE COURT HEREBY FINDS AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the litigation, the Parties, and all Settlement Class Members.

2. Unless defined herein, all defined terms in this Order shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Agreement.

3. The Court has conducted a preliminary evaluation of the Settlement as set forth in the Agreement for fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness. Based on that evaluation, the Court finds there is cause to believe that: (i) the Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and within the range of possible approval; (ii) the Agreement has been negotiated in good faith at arms-length between experienced attorneys familiar with the legal and factual issues of this case; and (iii) with respect to the forms of notice of the material terms of the Agreement to Settlement Class Members for their consideration and reaction, that notice is appropriate and warranted. Therefore, the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement.

4. The Court, pursuant to Rule 23(a) and Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, conditionally certifies, for purposes of this Settlement only, the following Settlement Class:

All users or subscribers to a wireless or cellular telephone service within the United States who used or subscribed to a phone number to which Wells Fargo made or initiated any call from April 21, 2011 to December 19, 2015, in connection with a student loan, using any automated dialing technology or artificial or prerecorded voice technology, according to Wells Fargo's available records.

Excluded from the Settlement Class are Wells Fargo and any affiliate or subsidiary of Wells Fargo, and any entities in which any of such companies have a controlling interest, as well as all persons who validly opt out of the Settlement Class.

5. The Court hereby appoints Jesse Prather and John W. Prather as Class Representatives of the Settlement Class pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

6. The Court appoints Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP and Burke Law Offices, LLC as co-lead Class Counsel, and Greenwald Davidson Radbil PLLC, Meyer Wilson Co., LPA, Skaar & Feagle, LLP, Keogh Law Ltd., Kazerouni Law Group, APC, Law Offices of Douglas J. Champion, APC, and Hyde & Swigart as additional Class Counsel, pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

7. On **August 30, 2017 at 2 p.m.**, in Courtroom 1907 of the Richard B. Russell Federal Building and United States Courthouse, 75 Ted Turner Drive, SW, Atlanta, Georgia, or at such other date and time later set by Court Order, this Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on the fairness, adequacy and reasonableness of the Agreement and to determine whether (i) final approval of the Settlement embodied by the Agreement should be granted, and (ii) Class Counsel's application for attorneys' fees and expenses, and incentive award to Plaintiff, should be granted, and in what amount. No later than **April 24, 2017**, Plaintiffs must file papers in support of Class Counsel's application for attorneys' fees and expenses, and the

incentive awards to the Class Representatives. No later than **August 16, 2017**, which is fourteen (14) days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiffs must file papers in support of final approval of the Settlement and respond to any written objections. Defendant may (but is not required to) file papers in support of final approval of the Settlement, so long as it does so no later than **August 16, 2017**.

8. Pursuant to the Agreement, KCC, LLC is hereby appointed as Claims Administrator and shall be required to perform all the duties of the Claims Administrator as set forth in the Agreement and this Order.

9. The Court approves the proposed Notice Plan for giving notice to the Settlement Class (i) directly (using postcards), (ii) through an internet publication notice campaign; (iii) through a toll-free telephone number; (iv) through a press release; and (v) by establishing a Settlement Website at the web address of www.PratherWellsFargoTCPA.com, as more fully described in the Agreement. The Notice Plan, in form, method, and content, complies with the requirements of Rule 23 and due process, and constitutes the best notice practicable under the circumstances. The Court hereby directs the Parties and the Claims Administrator to complete all aspects of the Notice Plan no later than **March 22, 2017**, in accordance with the terms of the Agreement.

10. The Claims Administrator will file with the Court by no later than **August 16, 2017**, which is fourteen (14) days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, proof

that Notice was provided in accordance with the Agreement and this Preliminary Approval Order, as well as proof that notice was provided to the appropriate State and federal officials pursuant to the Class Action Fairness Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1715.

11. Settlement Class Members who wish to either object to the Settlement or request to be excluded from it must do so by the Objection Deadline and Opt-Out Deadline of **May 22, 2017**, which are both sixty (60) calendar days after the Settlement Notice Date. Settlement Class Members may not both object and opt out. If a Settlement Class Member submits both a Request for Exclusion and an objection, the Request for Exclusion will be controlling.

12. To submit a Request for Exclusion, Settlement Class Members must follow the directions in the Notice and send a compliant request to the Claims Administrator at the address designated in the Class Notice by the Opt-Out Deadline. In the Request for Exclusion, the Settlement Class Member must state his or her full name, address, and telephone number, and must state in writing that he or she wishes to be excluded from the Settlement. No Request for Exclusion will be valid unless all of the information described above is included. No Settlement Class Member, or any person acting on behalf of or in concert or participation with that Settlement Class Member, may exclude any other Settlement Class Member from the Settlement Class; however, nothing herein shall

prevent Class Members from obtaining the assistance of another, such as a lawyer or family member, in preparing or submitting any individual exclusion.

13. If a timely and valid Request for Exclusion is made by a member of the Settlement Class, then that person will not be a Settlement Class Member, and the Agreement and any determinations and judgments concerning it will not bind the excluded person.

14. All Settlement Class Members who do not opt out in accordance with the terms set forth in the Agreement will be bound by all determinations and judgments concerning the Agreement.

15. To object to the Settlement, Settlement Class Members must follow the directions in the Notice and file a written Objection with the Court by the Objection Deadline. In the written Objection, the Settlement Class Member must state his or her full name, address, current telephone number, and cellular telephone number(s) that the Settlement Class Member alleges received a call from Defendant. He or she must also state the reasons for his or her Objection, and whether he or she intends to appear at the Fairness Hearing on his or her own behalf or through counsel. Any documents that the Settlement Class Member wishes the Court to consider must also be attached to the Objection. Any and all objections shall identify any lawyer that represents the Settlement Class Member as to the case or such objection. No Objection will be valid unless all of the

information described above is included. Copies of all papers filed with the Court must be simultaneously delivered to Class Counsel and counsel for the Defendant. The Parties will have the right to depose any objector as to the basis and circumstances of his or her objection, and to assess the objector's standing.

16. If a Settlement Class Member does not submit a written comment on the proposed Settlement or the application of Class Counsel for attorneys' fees and expenses and the incentive award in accordance with the deadline and procedure set forth in the Notice, and the Settlement Class Member wishes to appear and be heard at the Final Approval Hearing, the Settlement Class Member must file a notice of intention to appear with the Court and serve a copy upon Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel no later than the Objection/Opt-Out Deadline, and comply with all other requirements of the Court for such an appearance.

17. Any Settlement Class Member who fails to timely file a written objection with the Court and notice of his or her intent to appear at the Final Approval Hearing in accordance with the terms of this Order, above and as detailed in the Notice, and at the same time provide copies to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel, shall not be permitted to object to the Agreement at the Final Approval Hearing, shall be foreclosed from seeking any review of the Agreement by appeal or other means, shall be deemed to have waived his, her, or its objections, and shall be forever barred from making any such objections in the

Action. All members of the Settlement Class, except those members of the Settlement Class who submit timely Requests for Exclusion, will be bound by all determinations and judgments in the Action, whether favorable or unfavorable to the Settlement Class.

18. Pending the final determination of whether the Settlement should be approved, all pre-trial proceedings and briefing schedules in the Action are stayed. If the Settlement is terminated or final approval does not for any reason occur, the stay will be immediately terminated.

19. If the Settlement is not approved or consummated for any reason whatsoever, the Settlement and all proceedings in connection with the Settlement will be without prejudice to the right of Defendant or the Settlement Class Representative to assert any right or position that could have been asserted if the Agreement had never been reached or proposed to the Court. In such an event, the Parties will return to the *status quo ante* in the Action and the certification of the Settlement Class will be deemed vacated. The certification of the Settlement Class for settlement purposes, or any briefing or materials submitted seeking certification of the Settlement Class, will not be considered in connection with any subsequent class certification decision.

20. The Agreement and any and all negotiations, documents, and discussions associated with it, will not be deemed or construed to be an admission

or evidence of any violation of any statute, law, rule, regulation, or principle of common law or equity, or of any liability or wrongdoing, by Defendant, or the truth of any of the claims, and evidence relating to the Agreement will not be discoverable or used, directly or indirectly, in any way, whether in the Action or in any other action or proceeding, except for purposes of demonstrating, describing, implementing, or enforcing the terms and conditions of the Agreement, this Order, and the Final Judgment and Order of Dismissal.

21. Counsel are hereby authorized to use all reasonable procedures in connection with approval and administration of the Settlement that are not materially inconsistent with this Order or the Agreement, including making, without further approval of the Court, minor changes to the form or content of the Notice and Claim Form, and other exhibits that they jointly agree are reasonable and necessary. The Court reserves the right to approve the Agreement with such modifications, if any, as may be agreed to by the Parties without further notice to the members of the Class.

22. Accordingly, the following are the deadlines by which certain events must occur:

<p>[March 22, 2017] [25 calendar days after the date of this order]</p>	<p>Deadline to Provide Class Notice</p>
<p>[April 24, 2017] [30 days after the</p>	<p>Deadline for Plaintiffs' Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Incentive Award</p>

Settlement Notice Date, adjusted for the weekend]	
[May 22, 2017 [60 days after the Settlement Notice Date]	Deadline for Class Members to file Objections or submit Requests for Exclusion
[August 16, 2017 [14 days before the Final Approval Hearing]	Deadline for Parties to File the Following: (1) List of Class Members who Made Timely and Proper Requests for Exclusion; (2) Proof of Class Notice and CAFA Notice (to be filed by the Administrator); and (3) Motion and Memorandum in Support of Final Approval, including responses to any Objections.
[June 22, 2017 [90 days after the Settlement Notice Date]	Deadline for Settlement Class Members to Submit a Claim Form
August 30, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.	Final Approval Hearing

SO ORDERED.

Dated: February 24, 2017

s/Steve C. Jones

Hon. Steve C. Jones
United States District Court Judge