

**FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE, WAIVER, AND CONSENT
NO. 2021070010301**

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

RE: Donna Jean Hines (Respondent)
Former General Securities Representative
CRD No. 4275524

Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9216, Respondent Donna Jean Hines 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 hereby accepts and consents, without admitting or denying the findings and solely for the purposes of this proceeding and any other proceeding brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, prior to a hearing and without an adjudication of any issue of law or fact, to the entry of the following findings by FINRA:

BACKGROUND

Hines first associated with a FINRA member in 2000. In 2013, Hines became registered with FINRA as a General Securities Representative through her association with Cetera Advisors LLC (Cetera). On May 4, 2021, Cetera filed a Uniform Termination Notice for Securities Industry Registration (Form U5) for Hines, terminating her registration with FINRA.

Although Hines is not currently associated with a FINRA member, FINRA retains jurisdiction over her pursuant to Article V, Section 4(a)(i) of FINRA's By-Laws.¹

OVERVIEW

In connection with FINRA's investigation into whether Hines facilitated a customer's bitcoin investment for compensation, FINRA staff issued Hines a request for on-the-record testimony pursuant to FINRA Rule 8210. Hines refused to appear for on-the-record testimony, in violation of FINRA Rules 8210 and 2010.

¹ For more information about the respondent, visit BrokerCheck® at www.finra.org/brokercheck.

FACTS AND VIOLATIVE CONDUCT

This matter originates from a Cetera customer's lawsuit alleging that Hines facilitated the customer's bitcoin investment away from Cetera for compensation.

FINRA Rule 8210(a)(1) states, in relevant part, that FINRA may "require a...person associated with a member, or any other person subject to FINRA's jurisdiction, to provide information orally, in writing, or electronically...and to testify at a location specified by FINRA staff...with respect to any matter involved in [a FINRA] investigation." FINRA Rule 8210(c) states that "[n]o...person shall fail to provide information or testimony...pursuant to this Rule." A violation of FINRA Rule 8210 is also a violation of FINRA Rule 2010, which requires associated persons, in the conduct of their business, to "observe high standards of commercial honor and just and equitable principles of trade."

Although Hines initially cooperated with FINRA's investigation, she ceased doing so in September 2021. Specifically, on September 16, 2021, FINRA sent a request to Hines for on-the-record testimony pursuant to FINRA Rule 8210. As stated during her counsel's telephone call with FINRA on September 30, 2021, and by this agreement, Hines acknowledges that she received FINRA's request and will not appear for on-the-record testimony at any time. By refusing to appear for on-the-record testimony as requested pursuant to FINRA Rule 8210, Hines violated FINRA Rules 8210 and 2010.

- B. Respondent also consents to the imposition of the following sanctions:
- a bar from associating with any FINRA member in all capacities.

Respondent understands that if she is barred or suspended from associating with any FINRA member, she 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, she 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. A bar or expulsion shall become effective upon approval or acceptance of this AWC.

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 her;
- 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 prejudice 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.

Respondent certifies that she has read and understands all of the provisions of this AWC and has been given a full opportunity to ask questions about it; 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 her to submit this AWC.

10/27/21

Date

Donna J. Hines

Donna Jean Hines
Respondent

Reviewed by:

Kevin A. Nelson

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Accepted by FINRA:

November 8, 2021

Date

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

Sean W. Firley

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