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Julia Strickland

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Strickland serves as chair of Stroock’s Financial Services Litigation, Regulation and Enforcement Group, and is a member of the firm’s national Executive Committee and managing partner of its Los Angeles office. She is frequently recognized as a top attorney in consumer finance litigation and is particularly experienced in the defense of high-stakes class actions on behalf of mortgage lenders. Her clients include American Express, Citigroup, Discover, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase and Lending Club, among many others.

In recent years, Strickland has seen a significant uptick in litigation related to scams and deposit account fraud, including claims of financial elder abuse based largely on wire transfer scams. The increase in such fraud may be in part because of increasing reliance on technology to move money around, she said.

“Elders have always been targets for fraudsters—that’s not news,” Strickland said. “But the ability to pretty easily move money through wire transfers and to move money offshore has just made it more feasible for fraudsters to do the wrong thing.”

She is currently defending various financial institutions in such litigation, which has little dispositive case law. A recent elder abuse case involves an alleged scam perpetrated by unknown third-party fraudsters who

convinced the plaintiffs to wire funds from their account to bank accounts in China. Plaintiffs asserted that the bank “assisted” the fraud by failing to detect and prevent it. Strickland argued that when vulnerable customers are scammed by third parties, the bank should not be liable unless there is actual knowledge of the fraud.

Consumer attorneys have been pushing for courts to apply a strict standard which, if adopted, would create significant exposure to banks and require them to second-guess the circumstances of potential risk for their customers, which is both an invasion of privacy and discrimination against elders, Strickland said. The court granted Strickland’s motion to dismiss, agreeing that the standard for “assisting” financial elder abuse requires plaintiffs to plead and prove that the bank had actual knowledge of the purported scam.

“The case makes clear that unless the bank has actual knowledge that there’s fraud at work, the bank isn’t charged with doing all those things that might actually offend people and be discriminatory,” she said.

Another hot area of interest revolves around the enforcement of arbitration clauses. In multiple rulings in California, Strickland has successfully compelled arbitration of claims asserted in putative class actions against several clients.



She has argued multiple cases to the California Supreme Court, as well as appearing before the U.S. Supreme Court in precedential matters.

“The newer wave of litigation has to do with whether arbitration clauses are enforceable when plaintiff seeks public injunctive relief. We’ve litigated quite a few cases as to what actually constitutes public injunctive relief,” Strickland said. “Relatedly, we’re now seeing plaintiff’s lawyers taking a completely different angle in certain instances,” bringing mass arbitrations of hundreds or even thousands of individuals, which can impose significant costs on companies.

— JENNIFER CHUNG KLAM