requests that the Congress transfer to it (from the FTC) the responsibility for monitoring Regulation B and the ECOA in its programs. SBA said it believes this would avoid duplicative administrative hearings when certain violations are alleged. The Office of Equal Opportunity within the Department of Agriculture recommends that discrimination because of a handicap be included among the prohibited bases under the ECOA.

IV. UNIFORM GUIDELINES FOR ENFORCING REGULATION B

The five Federal agencies that supervise Federally insured financial institutions--the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Federal Reserve Board, and the National Credit Union Administration -- have jointly proposed uniform guidelines for enforcement of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, its implementing Regulation B, and the Fair Housing Act. The guidelines were issued for public comment in June 1978. They are intended to promote improved and uniform enforcement of the equal credit opportunity and fair housing laws among Federally regulated financial institutions, by requiring corrective action for violations discovered during examinations and through investigation of complaints.

The enforcing agencies would encourage voluntary correction and compliance, and take the actions noted in the guidelines to correct violations. These violations include discouraging applications on a prohibited basis, using discriminatory elements in credit evaluation systems, charging a higher rate of interest on a prohibited basis or requiring insurance in violation of fair housing or equal credit opportunity laws, requiring a cosigner on a prohibited basis, failing to provide notices of adverse action, failing to maintain and report separate credit histories where required, failing to collect information for monitoring purposes, and terminating or changing the terms of accounts on a prohibited basis. In each case, the circumstances would be considered in determining the suitability of the remedy provided in the uniform guidelines. If violations remain uncorrected, the enforcing agencies would take administrative actions to ensure correction. The agencies have reviewed the comments received and are working toward final guidelines.

V. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF REGULATION B

In June 1978 the Board announced that it was embarking on a comprehensive review of all its regulations, to determine whether they needed modernization or improvement. The style and format of existing regu1-tions are receiving special attention in an attempt to make Federal Reserve regulations more understandable and to reduce the burden of compliance. The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, which was assigned responsiblity for reviewing Regulation B, submitted its report to the Board at the end of 1978. The Board's staff will review the report and make recommendations to the Board.

VI. NEW INFORMATION

During the past year, the Board published the results of two studies--a major survey of consumers and a less extensive collection of data from creditors.[1] Both inquiries were undertaken to learn more about credit use and consumer needs and to provide information about consumer awareness and use of consumer credit legislation.

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[1] Thomas A. Durkin and Gregory Elliehausen, 1977 Consumer Credit Survey (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 1978); "Exercise of Consumer Rights under the Equal Credit Opportunity and Fair Credit Billing Acts," Federal Reserve Bulletin, vol. 64 (May 1978), pp. 363-66.