

Greetings & a warm welcome to this week's edition of 401k Real Talk – hope you and yours had a Happy Thanksgiving. This is Fred Barstein contributing editor at WealthManagement.com's RPA omnichannel and CEO at TRAU, TPSU & 401kTV - I review all of the past week's stories and select the most important and interesting ones providing open honest and candid discussion you will not get anyway else. So let's get real!

Though many of Trump's cabinet nominations have been shocking, [the nomination of outgoing Oregon congresswoman Lori Chavez-Deremer for DOL Secretary is surprising](#) to many because of her support of unions.

Among the issues facing the DOL is the definition of contractor status as well as whether to defend the fiduciary rule in court which the previous Trump DOL administration did not.

Regardless of her history, the nominee is expected to carry out the president elect Trump's agenda first and foremost regardless of Chavez-Deremer's past history.

After a rocky history particularly in its efforts to go public, [Canadian CI Financial and US subsidiary Corient is being bought by an Abu Dhabi](#) fund at a \$8.7 bn valuation.

While CI has \$518bn in assets, many believe that Corient's \$185bn of client assets are the main prize. Just this year, another Abu Dhabi fund took a minority stake in Fisher Investments estimated to be valued at \$12.75bn with \$275 bn in assets. It seems like private equity has a greater appetite for advisory firms than the public markets with Focus Financial going private in 2023 and Thomas Lee deciding not to test the public markets with Hightower. Both Creative Planning and Captrust have taken on private investors this year though both with minority stakes.

Bain announced the [completion of the purchase of Investnet](#) for a reported \$4.5 bn managing \$6.5 tr of the assets of 110,000 advisors. Interim CEO Jim Fox has been retained until the end of January 2025.

Investnet has tried repeatedly to penetrate the DC market most recently buying 401kPlans.com led by head of retirement Sean Murray with mixed results and

Murray recently departing for Goldman Sachs leaving questions about the viability of their acquisition intended to leverage the explosion of small plans by streamlining the proposal and onboarding process. Interested to see Envestnet's next move in the DC space for which they are well positioned but as yet have not fulfilled their potential.

With a major new tax bill expected to be fast tracked in 2025, DC plans will likely be on the menu with more Rothification expected as Congress hunts for revenue.

And while the DC industry is still digesting SECURE 2.0, [there is talk of SECURE 3.0](#) which could include mandating auto features for all plans, not just new ones, and allowing 18 year olds to participate.

Not expected to be included is the fiduciary rule which is likely expected to die in the courts.

The RPA industry is about to experience a dramatic transformation just as it did over 20 years ago when fiduciary advisors conducting independent due diligence

on funds and record keepers ran roughshod over conflicted brokers and insurance agents.

Read my recent [WealthManagement.com/RPA column](https://www.wealthmanagement.com/rpa-column) about how current RPAs are about to experience a similar and may even more dramatic transformation led by convergence, consolidation and government intervention leaving conflicted RPAs scrambling just as brokers and insurance agents did over two decades ago.

So those were the most important stories from the past week. I listed a few others I thought were worth reading covering:

- [States sue Blackrock, State Street and Vanguard over ESG](#)
- [State mandates continue to grow](#)
- [A new ruling may open the window for more ERISA litigation](#)
- [Experts speculate on the next 50 years for ERISA](#)

Please let me know if I missed anything or if you would like to comment. Otherwise I look forward to speaking to you next week on 401k Real Talk.