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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

President Barack Obama, while in Cleveland, took some time out and stopped by the Holborn Avenue
home of William and Endia Eason Wednesday afternoon before going to
Shaker Heights High School
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The Eason’s almost lost their Cleveland home after falling victim to a predatory lender. President Obama was joined during the 20-minute visit by Richard Cordray, former Ohio Attorney General who was appointed by the president as head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and Deonna Kirkpatrick, communications director for Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People (ESOP), a local housing advocacy group that helped get the Eason’s out of debt.

The Eason’s, who bought their home in 1971, were told by the city in 2001 that their front steps violated city code and needed to be repaired. Kirkpatrick said a predatory lender told the Eason’s that if they didn't take out an $8,000 loan to make repairs, they would go to jail.

Kirkpatrick said the repairs were never done, the loan was flipped multiple times, and the Eason’s were suddenly $80,000 in debt. With ESOP's help, the mortgage broker's company wrote off part of the loan and backed off on foreclosure.

Obama "told them they were taken advantage of when they thought they were doing the right thing, and he said what happened to them, he doesn't want to see happen to others," Kirkpatrick said.

Mrs. Eason, 91, who once ran a home bakery, baked Obama two pies, one sweet potato and one peach and made 21 others, including cherry pies for the president's staff and secret service agents.

"Ms. Eason makes a really good sweet potato pie," Obama said later in his speech at Shaker Heights High School
. "I'm going to eat it later. I didn't want to eat it before because I didn't want to get sleepy having a big piece of pie" before the speech.

Mr. William Eason is one of Eliza Bryant Village remarkable residents who continue to live life with extraordinary zest sharing his creative talents and spreading his enthusiasm for living throughout The Village.

At 80 years young, Mr. Eason has served our country with distinction as a Marine in the Korean Conflict from 1952 to 1954. He proudly wears a hat that he wore during the war. He is also a Shriner and a 32nd degree Mason.

Mr. Eason has an illustrious history in Cleveland and surrounding communities as both a dancer and a boxer. At the age of 55, he was competing in dance competitions throughout the State of Ohio. He and his wife would win competitions in jitter bug, cha-cha and mambo. People would cheer as he incorporated the splits into his routines.

His accomplishments do not stop here. As a professional welter weight boxer with 147 bouts, he sparred with Paul Pender who fought Sugar Ray Robinson.

Defying congressional Republicans, President Obama appointed Richard Cordray last week to head a new consumer-protection agency. “When Congress refuses to act, and as a result, hurts our economy and puts our people at risk, then I have an obligation as President to do what I can

without them," said President Obama.

As consumer watchdog chief, Cordray will practically serve out Obama's first term in office, leading an agency established by the president through the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to protect both American consumers and the economy from what he viewed as gluttonous grab of greedy Wall Street executives.

According to the White House, the agency's foremost mission is to look out for the interest of the consumer against the abusive and deceptive practices of Wall Street, a role that would include monitoring mortgage companies, payday lenders, debt collectors and a host of other financial operations.

The decision to install Cordray as director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau without Senate approval rankled Republicans in part because they say the U.S. Senate is not on recess. The U.S. Constitution permits such appointments only when the Senate is not in session.

The President nominated Cordray in July to head a bureau designed to give consumers better information about financial services and watch for unfair, deceptive or abusive acts or practices by financial companies, including credit-card providers and mortgage companies.

But last month the Senate refused to confirm Cordray, with Ohio's Sen. Rob Portman and more than 40 other Republican senators using a filibuster to prevent a floor vote.

"Every day that Richard waited to be confirmed ... was another day when millions of Americans were left unprotected," Obama said. "Because without a director in place, the

consumer-watchdog agency we've set up doesn't have the tools it needs to prevent dishonest mortgage brokers, payday lenders and debt collectors from taking advantage of consumers, and that's inexcusable. It's wrong. And I refuse to take 'no' for an answer."

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The Eason's are still excited from the visit with President Obama and Richard Cordray. "I really enjoyed our visit with the President and now I have to get in the kitchen and get to cooking now since he has been here," said Mrs. Eason.

Since the President's visit Mrs. Eason phone has been busy with people asking her to bake them pies. "I had someone in the bank ask me to make them 2 peach cobblers and 15 sweet potatoes pies, now everybody knows I make the best pies," said Mrs. Eason.