

From: Hughes, Laura [mailto:lj_ak@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2015 10:05 AM
To: Sen. Kevin Meyer
Subject: Dear Senator Kevin Meyer,

Senator.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.gov

Dear Senator Kevin Meyer,

Hello, my name is Laura Hughes. I am a South-Anchorage resident in your district, District M. I am writing to ask for your assistance in passing legislation that would protect the credit of children/minors in the state of Alaska.

Currently in Alaska, a parent or guardian cannot request that a credit report for a minor under the age of 18 be frozen unless that child's credit has actually been stolen or used inappropriately.

Children are increasingly more likely to have identities stolen as a result of this age gap where no protection is afforded. According to the 2012 Child Identity Theft Report, children are 35 times more likely to be subject to identity theft than adults.

This increases the probability that a parent or the minor would not catch such a crime until reported to a collection agency, or until the individual applied for some sort of credit or financial aid. As a result, a minor may turn 18 and unfortunately have to deal with this problem after requesting a report from the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion).

Clearing up fraudulent claims on a credit file can take from several months to several years, and it can also create undue stress for the individual that is the victim of identity theft.

Currently the credit bureaus offer "credit monitoring services" that in reality provide no protection against identity theft, and are a product solely for generating revenue for these companies that hold information vital to fiscal development of everyone's lives. The credit bureaus generate revenue by selling people's credit history to bidders.

It is in their financial interest to keep people in monitoring programs because once credit is frozen, they may not share information in credit files as freely. In addition, the three credit bureaus continually use strong-arm tactics and lobby against such legislation being passed.

In increasingly partisan atmospheres that persist across all levels of government, I feel that protecting the credit of children is an item of legislation that would cross both aisles. It would also be a great boost for representatives who help sponsor and pass such legislation as advocates of the common voter in Alaska.

As a parent of two young children, I worry often that we may find that someone could have tampered with or accessed their credit when they turn 18. This may severely limit their options if they were to try to apply financial aid for college, in addition to other financial decisions they may try to execute.

In addition, the sad truth of identity theft for children is that much of it is due to unscrupulous activity of a dishonest family member who may be in dire financial straits.

The states of Delaware, Georgia, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas have all recently passed or are in process of passing legislation giving parents or guardians the ability to protect their children at birth. Please help the children of Alaska do the same with sensible legislation. I would be willing to assist with this effort as a vocal advocate if it would help move this agenda forward.

Thank you very much for your time and support of the Anchorage and Alaska communities.

Sincerely,

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