



Sen. Tim Green's Consumer Protection Legislation Advances

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – This morning, the Missouri Senate Commerce, Energy and the Environment committee heard Sen. Timothy Green's (D-Spanish Lake) Senate Bill 882 which allows consumers to request that a security freeze be placed on the issuance of their credit reports and/or credit scores by credit reporting agencies.

"Missouri is one of eleven states that have not passed a law requiring the availability of the security freeze," said Sen. Green. "Passage of this legislation will advance Missouri's consumer protection laws."

Credit card companies, merchants, other businesses, and government entities do not always adequately safeguard consumers' private financial information, making it relatively easy for thieves to steal this data and use it to take out new credit or to rack up charges on existing accounts. As a result, identity theft is one of the fastest growing financial crimes. More than 8 million Americans fall victim each year.

"One of the best identity theft prevention tools is the security freeze. A security freeze gives consumers the choice to "freeze" or lock access to their credit file against anyone trying to open up a new account or to get new credit in their name," said Sen. Green.

Most businesses will not issue new credit or provide goods or services for later payment to an individual without first reviewing his or her credit report and/or credit score. If an individual consumer reporting file is frozen and an imposter applies for credit in that individual's name, a creditor likely would deny the imposter's application, preventing an instance of identity theft.

Under a security freeze law, people who choose to freeze access to their consumer reporting files may temporarily lift the freeze when they want to use their own credit files. When a consumer places the freeze, the consumer reporting agency issues a unique PIN to the consumer that can be used to "thaw" or lift the security freeze for a particular entity or for a designated period of time.

The security freeze is offered voluntarily by Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion to consumers living in the eleven states that have not yet adopted security freeze laws, including Missouri.

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