



Consumer Protection Measure Will Notify Missourians of Security Breaches

JEFFERSON CITY — As cyber criminals threaten the integrity of data in this virtual age, Missouri is working to stay ahead of them and to give consumers the tools they need to protect their personal and financial information when a company's data is breached.

My proposal to help consumers ward off identity theft in the case of a security breach — passed by the General Assembly this year in its omnibus crime bill ([House Bill 62](#)) — seeks to inform Missouri consumers of security breaches that could result in identity theft or financial harm. I'm very pleased the measure will work to curb cyber crimes and will build upon similar consumer protections that I advanced through the General Assembly last year to protect consumers from identity theft by allowing security freezes on their credit files.

Just recently, a top Department of Justice official testified to Congress detailing new techniques used by cyber-criminals to steal personal data, putting millions of Americans at risk for identity theft. With this legislation, Missouri is joining a national movement of states that have passed similar laws requiring notification to consumers when personal data is stolen so they can take appropriate action.

The proposed legislation, which awaits the governor's signature and, if signed, becomes effective on Aug. 28, would provide better protections for Missouri consumers by requiring companies that own or license personal information or maintain or possess records of data containing personal information of residents of Missouri to notify affected consumers or owners or licensees of the information of any security breach immediately following discovery of the breach.

Under the bill's measures, consumers would be notified of the type of information compromised, advice on how to further protect their personal information and be provided with contact information for consumer reporting agencies. Notification would be required to be made without unreasonable delay by phone, email, or in writing. If the personal information of more than 1,000 Missourians has been breached, companies would be required to notify the Attorney General's office, which would then have the authority to seek civil penalties up to \$150,000 per security breach.

Missourians have every right to know if their personal information has possibly been stolen and these consumer protections will serve to ensure that consumers are afforded more protections from this kind of disruptive, invasive and harmful criminal activity.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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