



Press Release

Attorney General Frosh Joins Multistate Coalition Fighting to Protect Consumer Credit During Coronavirus Pandemic

BALTIMORE, MD (April 28, 2020) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today joined a coalition of 22 attorneys general warning the nation’s three Consumer Reporting Agencies (CRAs) that, as Americans continue to struggle from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 public health crisis, they will not hesitate to enforce safeguards set in place to ensure consumers’ credit is properly protected and that their credit reports are fairly and accurately reported.

In a [letter](#) to Experian Information Solutions, Inc.; Equifax Information Services, LLC; and TransUnion LCC, the coalition outlines their commitment to enforcing the consumer credit protections outlined in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed last month, as well as in the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), despite the federal government’s failure to commit to enforcing these protections. The letter emphasizes that the coalition will continue to actively monitor and enforce compliance during the COVID-19 crisis and will hold the CRAs accountable for failure to meet their obligations.

“The CARES Act makes clear that consumers can receive assistance from the federal government without it becoming a stain on their credit. CRAs must honor the consumer protections in the CARES Act. If they fail to do so, our office will enforce the law to protect the Marylanders who have suffered during this crisis,” said Attorney General Frosh.

In March 2020, Congress enacted the CARES Act to extend relief to struggling consumers, including an amendment to the FCRA enabling consumers to obtain CARES Act relief without incurring lasting harm to their credit scores. To prevent such harm, the CARES Act requires furnishers to report a credit obligation as “current” if the obligation was current prior to the grant of a CARES Act accommodation. The FCRA also protects consumers by requiring CRAs to promptly investigate when consumers dispute the accuracy of information on their credit report. But under the Trump administration, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently issued guidance indicating it will not enforce certain requirements of the FCRA during the COVID-19 crisis.

In today’s letter, the coalition warned the three CRAs that if the federal government is not protecting consumers, each state will enforce the requirements of the FCRA and individual agreements between CRAs and states to conduct meaningful and timely investigations of consumer disputes of credit information.

“This CARES Act provision is critically important both to individual consumers and to the overall recovery of the economy because it ensures that consumers obtain essential relief without jeopardizing their future ability to secure employment, rent or buy a home, obtain a credit card, or purchase a car,” the attorneys general write in their letter. “The state attorneys general expect compliance with this vital provision of the CARES Act, and we will actively monitor for and enforce such compliance.”

The coalition urges CRAs to meet their obligations under the law to protect consumers against incorrect information in their credit reports, which could prevent them from undertaking activities they would have been able to do before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Today’s letter follows a letter the coalition sent to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau on April 13, urging the agency to rescind its announcement that it would not enforce certain provisions of the CARES Act and the FCRA.

Joining Attorney General Frosh in signing today’s letter are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.