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Washington, DC 20515-3214
October 31, 2007

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Donald A. Robert
Chief Executive Officer
Experian
475 Anton Blvd.
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Dear Mr. Robert:

I applaud your recent decision to make the security freeze available to all consumers regardless of whether they reside in states that have enacted legislation providing the security freeze. As of tomorrow, consumers throughout the country will be able to freeze access to their credit files at all three credit bureaus, giving them a powerful new tool to protect themselves from the most costly and difficult-to-resolve form of ID theft—new account fraud. The freeze is the only tool available that actually helps prevent new account fraud; many other available services merely allow the consumer to detect the fraud after it has already occurred.

While your decision is a strong step forward for consumers, I urge you to enhance the feasibility of the freeze by making it easier-to-use and more affordable for consumers. In addition, it is essential that consumers be able to locate easily information about the freeze on your web site. High costs, cumbersome procedures, and obscured information erect unnecessary barriers to consumers who are eager to freeze their files.

First, I urge you to consider reducing the costs of placing, temporarily lifting and removing the freeze. At \$10 per consumer per credit bureau, a two-earner family that places the freeze and lifts it just twice in a given year to access joint credit would pay \$180, putting the freeze out of reach for many households. Eliminating the costs of temporarily lifting or removing the freeze would encourage more consumers to place the freeze.

Second, I urge you to consider eliminating the administrative hurdles to placing and lifting the freeze. Experian is to be commended for voluntarily making a lift effective within 15 minutes of an electronic or phone request; doing so reduces consumer concerns that they will be unable to quickly access credit if they place a freeze, encouraging more consumers to use this powerful new ID theft prevention tool. I have encouraged Equifax and TransUnion to follow your lead. While I applaud Experian for allowing consumers to place the freeze via regular rather than certified mail, providing multiple methods of placement, such as phone or a secure electronic method would make it easier for consumers to place the freeze. Finally, I encourage you to work with the other credit bureaus to provide one-stop-shopping for placement of the freeze so that consumers need not make three separate requests in order to place and lift the freeze.

Third, I encourage you to make it easier for consumers to find clear and concise information about the freeze on your website. Prominently displaying on your homepage a link to information about the security freeze and how to use it would give consumers access to freeze information without first having to navigate through the different pages of Experian's website.

While Experian currently provides information about the freeze on its site, it is difficult for consumers to locate. And because Experian is marketing its own branded security freeze tool as part of its larger package of credit monitoring products, it is essential that Experian prominently disclose that the freeze is also available as a standalone product at lower cost. While confusion over whether the freeze is available on its own is a concern for all consumers, it is particularly worrisome for consumers who reside in states that provide the freeze right by law, but who are unaware of that right. They may be led to believe that the freeze is only available through the costly bundle.

Again, I applaud your efforts to make the security freeze available to consumers throughout the country. It is an excellent first step in giving consumers a powerful new identity theft prevention tool. I look forward to working with you to make the security freeze more affordable and accessible for consumers.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress