

## EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective upon the expiration of one hundred and eighty days following Oct. 26, 1970, see section 504(d) of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 91-508, set out as a note under section 1681 of this title.

## PROMPT INVESTIGATION OF DISPUTED CONSUMER INFORMATION

Pub. L. 108-159, title III, §313(b), Dec. 4, 2003, 117 Stat. 1994, provided that:

“(1) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Board and the Commission shall jointly study the extent to which, and the manner in which, consumer reporting agencies and furnishers of consumer information to consumer reporting agencies are complying with the procedures, time lines, and requirements under the Fair Credit Reporting Act [this subchapter] for the prompt investigation of the disputed accuracy of any consumer information, the completeness of the information provided to consumer reporting agencies, and the prompt correction or deletion, in accordance with such Act, of any inaccurate or incomplete information or information that cannot be verified.

“(2) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Before the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 4, 2003], the Board and the Commission shall jointly submit a progress report to the Congress on the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

“(3) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—In preparing the report required under paragraph (2), the Board and the Commission shall consider information relating to complaints compiled by the Commission under section 611(e) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681i(e)], as added by this section.

“(4) **RECOMMENDATIONS.**—The report required under paragraph (2) shall include such recommendations as the Board and the Commission jointly determine to be appropriate for legislative or administrative action, to ensure that—

“(A) consumer disputes with consumer reporting agencies over the accuracy or completeness of information in a consumer’s file are promptly and fully investigated and any incorrect, incomplete, or unverifiable information is corrected or deleted immediately thereafter;

“(B) furnishers of information to consumer reporting agencies maintain full and prompt compliance with the duties and responsibilities established under section 623 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681s-2]; and

“(C) consumer reporting agencies establish and maintain appropriate internal controls and management review procedures for maintaining full and continuous compliance with the procedures, time lines, and requirements under the Fair Credit Reporting Act [this subchapter] for the prompt investigation of the disputed accuracy of any consumer information and the prompt correction or deletion, in accordance with such Act, of any inaccurate or incomplete information or information that cannot be verified.”

[For definitions of terms used in section 313(b) of Pub. L. 108-159, set out above, see section 2 of Pub. L. 108-159, set out as a Definitions note under section 1681 of this title.]

## § 1681j. Charges for certain disclosures

## (a) Free annual disclosure

## (1) Nationwide consumer reporting agencies

## (A) In general

All consumer reporting agencies described in subsections (p) and (w)<sup>1</sup> of section 1681a of this title shall make all disclosures pursuant to section 1681g of this title once during any

12-month period upon request of the consumer and without charge to the consumer.

## (B) Centralized source

Subparagraph (A) shall apply with respect to a consumer reporting agency described in section 1681a(p) of this title only if the request from the consumer is made using the centralized source established for such purpose in accordance with section 211(c)<sup>1</sup> of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003.

## (C) Nationwide specialty consumer reporting agency

## (i) In general

The Commission<sup>2</sup> shall prescribe regulations applicable to each consumer reporting agency described in section 1681a(w)<sup>1</sup> of this title to require the establishment of a streamlined process for consumers to request consumer reports under subparagraph (A), which shall include, at a minimum, the establishment by each such agency of a toll-free telephone number for such requests.

## (ii) Considerations

In prescribing regulations under clause (i), the Bureau shall consider—

(I) the significant demands that may be placed on consumer reporting agencies in providing such consumer reports;

(II) appropriate means to ensure that consumer reporting agencies can satisfactorily meet those demands, including the efficacy of a system of staggering the availability to consumers of such consumer reports; and

(III) the ease by which consumers should be able to contact consumer reporting agencies with respect to access to such consumer reports.

## (iii) Date of issuance

The Commission<sup>2</sup> shall issue the regulations required by this subparagraph in final form not later than 6 months after December 4, 2003.

## (iv) Consideration of ability to comply

The regulations of the Bureau under this subparagraph shall establish an effective date by which each nationwide specialty consumer reporting agency (as defined in section 1681a(w)<sup>1</sup> of this title) shall be required to comply with subsection (a), which effective date—

(I) shall be established after consideration of the ability of each nationwide specialty consumer reporting agency to comply with subsection (a); and

(II) shall be not later than 6 months after the date on which such regulations are issued in final form (or such additional period not to exceed 3 months, as the Bureau determines appropriate).

## (2) Timing

A consumer reporting agency shall provide a consumer report under paragraph (1) not later

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

<sup>2</sup> So in original. Probably should be “Bureau”.

than 15 days after the date on which the request is received under paragraph (1).

**(3) Reinvestigations**

Notwithstanding the time periods specified in section 1681i(a)(1) of this title, a reinvestigation under that section by a consumer reporting agency upon a request of a consumer that is made after receiving a consumer report under this subsection shall be completed not later than 45 days after the date on which the request is received.

**(4) Exception for first 12 months of operation**

This subsection shall not apply to a consumer reporting agency that has not been furnishing consumer reports to third parties on a continuing basis during the 12-month period preceding a request under paragraph (1), with respect to consumers residing nationwide.

**(b) Free disclosure after adverse notice to consumer**

Each consumer reporting agency that maintains a file on a consumer shall make all disclosures pursuant to section 1681g of this title without charge to the consumer if, not later than 60 days after receipt by such consumer of a notification pursuant to section 1681m of this title, or of a notification from a debt collection agency affiliated with that consumer reporting agency stating that the consumer's credit rating may be or has been adversely affected, the consumer makes a request under section 1681g of this title.

**(c) Free disclosure under certain other circumstances**

Upon the request of the consumer, a consumer reporting agency shall make all disclosures pursuant to section 1681g of this title once during any 12-month period without charge to that consumer if the consumer certifies in writing that the consumer—

- (1) is unemployed and intends to apply for employment in the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the certification is made;
- (2) is a recipient of public welfare assistance;
- or
- (3) has reason to believe that the file on the consumer at the agency contains inaccurate information due to fraud.

**(d) Free disclosures in connection with fraud alerts**

Upon the request of a consumer, a consumer reporting agency described in section 1681a(p) of this title shall make all disclosures pursuant to section 1681g of this title without charge to the consumer, as provided in subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) of section 1681c-1 of this title, as applicable.

**(e) Other charges prohibited**

A consumer reporting agency shall not impose any charge on a consumer for providing any notification required by this subchapter or making any disclosure required by this subchapter, except as authorized by subsection (f).

**(f) Reasonable charges allowed for certain disclosures**

**(1) In general**

In the case of a request from a consumer other than a request that is covered by any of

subsections (a) through (d), a consumer reporting agency may impose a reasonable charge on a consumer—

(A) for making a disclosure to the consumer pursuant to section 1681g of this title, which charge—

- (i) shall not exceed \$8; and
- (ii) shall be indicated to the consumer before making the disclosure; and

(B) for furnishing, pursuant to section 1681i(d) of this title, following a reinvestigation under section 1681i(a) of this title, a statement, codification, or summary to a person designated by the consumer under that section after the 30-day period beginning on the date of notification of the consumer under paragraph (6) or (8) of section 1681i(a) of this title with respect to the reinvestigation, which charge—

- (i) shall not exceed the charge that the agency would impose on each designated recipient for a consumer report; and
- (ii) shall be indicated to the consumer before furnishing such information.

**(2) Modification of amount**

The Bureau shall increase the amount referred to in paragraph (1)(A)(i) on January 1 of each year, based proportionally on changes in the Consumer Price Index, with fractional changes rounded to the nearest fifty cents.

**(g) Prevention of deceptive marketing of credit reports**

**(1) In general**

Subject to rulemaking pursuant to section 205(b) of the Credit CARD Act of 2009, any advertisement for a free credit report in any medium shall prominently disclose in such advertisement that free credit reports are available under Federal law at: “AnnualCreditReport.com” (or such other source as may be authorized under Federal law).

**(2) Television and radio advertisement**

In the case of an advertisement broadcast by television, the disclosures required under paragraph (1) shall be included in the audio and visual part of such advertisement. In the case of an advertisement broadcast by television<sup>3</sup> or radio, the disclosure required under paragraph (1) shall consist only of the following: “This is not the free credit report provided for by Federal law”.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VI, §612, as added Pub. L. 91-508, title VI, §601, Oct. 26, 1970, 84 Stat. 1132; amended Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2410, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-442; Pub. L. 108-159, title II, §211(a), Dec. 4, 2003, 117 Stat. 1968; Pub. L. 111-24, title II, §205(a), May 22, 2009, 123 Stat. 1747; Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1088(a)(2)(A), (C), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2087.)

**Editorial Notes**

**REFERENCES IN TEXT**

Section 1681a(w) of this title, referred to in subsec. (a)(1)(A), (C)(i), (iv), was redesignated section 1681a(x)

<sup>3</sup> So in original. Probably should be “television”.

of this title by Pub. L. 111-203, title X, §1088(a)(1), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2086.

Section 211(c) of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003, referred to in subsec. (a)(1)(B), probably means section 211(d) of Pub. L. 108-159, which is set out as a note below and relates to the establishment of a centralized source. Section 211(c) of Pub. L. 108-159 amended section 1681g of this title.

Section 205(b) of the Credit CARD Act of 2009, referred to in subsec. (g), is section 205(b) of Pub. L. 111-24, which is set out as a note below.

#### AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a)(1)(C). Pub. L. 111-203, §1088(a)(2)(C), substituted “the Bureau” for “the Commission” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 111-203, §1088(a)(2)(A), substituted “Bureau” for “Federal Trade Commission”.

2009—Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 111-24 added subsec. (g).

2003—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 108-159, §211(a)(2), added subsec. (a). Former subsec. (a) redesignated (f).

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 108-159, §211(a)(4), added subsec. (d). Former subsec. (d) redesignated (e).

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 108-159, §211(a)(3), (5), redesignated subsec. (d) as (e) and substituted “subsection (f)” for “subsection (a)”.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 108-159, §211(a)(1), (6), redesignated subsec. (a) as (f) and substituted “In the case of a request from a consumer other than a request that is covered by any of subsections (a) through (d), a” for “Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), a” in par. (1).

1996—Pub. L. 104-208 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section read as follows: “A consumer reporting agency shall make all disclosures pursuant to section 1681g of this title and furnish all consumer reports pursuant to section 1681i(d) of this title without charge to the consumer if, within thirty days after receipt by such consumer of a notification pursuant to section 1681m of this title or notification from a debt collection agency affiliated with such consumer reporting agency stating that the consumer’s credit rating may be or has been adversely affected, the consumer makes a request under section 1681g or 1681i(d) of this title. Otherwise, the consumer reporting agency may impose a reasonable charge on the consumer for making disclosure to such consumer pursuant to section 1681g of this title, the charge for which shall be indicated to the consumer prior to making disclosure; and for furnishing notifications, statements, summaries, or codifications to person designated by the consumer pursuant to section 1681i(d) of this title, the charge for which shall be indicated to the consumer prior to furnishing such information and shall not exceed the charge that the consumer reporting agency would impose on each designated recipient for a consumer report except that no charge may be made for notifying such persons of the deletion of information which is found to be inaccurate or which can no longer be verified.”

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-203 effective on the designated transfer date, see section 1100H of Pub. L. 111-203, set out as a note under section 552a of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2009 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111-24 effective 9 months after May 22, 2009, except as otherwise specifically provided, see section 3 of Pub. L. 111-24, set out as a note under section 1602 of this title.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2003 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 108-159 subject to joint regulations establishing effective dates as prescribed by Federal Reserve Board and Federal Trade Commission, except as otherwise provided, see section 3 of Pub. L. 108-159, set out as a note under section 1681 of this title.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-208 effective 365 days after Sept. 30, 1996, with special rule for early compliance, see section 2420 of Pub. L. 104-208, set out as a note under section 1681a of this title.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective upon the expiration of one hundred and eighty days following Oct. 26, 1970, see section 504(d) of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 91-508, set out as a note under section 1681 of this title.

##### REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 111-24, title II, §205(b), May 22, 2009, 123 Stat. 1747, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act [May 22, 2009], the Federal Trade Commission shall issue a final rule to carry out this section.

“(2) CONTENT.—The rule required by this subsection—

“(A) shall include specific wording to be used in advertisements in accordance with this section; and

“(B) for advertisements on the Internet, shall include whether the disclosure required under section 612(g)(1) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681j(g)(1)] (as added by this section) shall appear on the advertisement or the website on which the free credit report is made available.

“(3) INTERIM DISCLOSURES.—If an advertisement subject to section 612(g) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681j(g)], as added by this section, is made public after the 9-month deadline specified in paragraph (1), but before the rule required by paragraph (1) is finalized, such advertisement shall include the disclosure: ‘Free credit reports are available under Federal law at: “AnnualCreditReport.com”.’”

Pub. L. 108-159, title II, §211(d), Dec. 4, 2003, 117 Stat. 1972, as amended by Pub. L. 111-203, §1088(b)(2), July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 2092, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau [probably means the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection] shall prescribe regulations applicable to consumer reporting agencies described in section 603(p) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681a(p)], to require the establishment of—

“(A) a centralized source through which consumers may obtain a consumer report from each such consumer reporting agency, using a single request, and without charge to the consumer, as provided in section 612(a) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681j(a)] (as amended by this section); and

“(B) a standardized form for a consumer to make such a request for a consumer report by mail or through an Internet website.

“(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In prescribing regulations under paragraph (1), the Bureau shall consider—

“(A) the significant demands that may be placed on consumer reporting agencies in providing such consumer reports;

“(B) appropriate means to ensure that consumer reporting agencies can satisfactorily meet those demands, including the efficacy of a system of staggering the availability to consumers of such consumer reports; and

“(C) the ease by which consumers should be able to contact consumer reporting agencies with respect to access to such consumer reports.

“(3) CENTRALIZED SOURCE.—The centralized source for a request for a consumer report from a consumer required by this subsection shall provide for—

“(A) a toll-free telephone number for such purpose;

“(B) use of an Internet website for such purpose; and

“(C) a process for requests by mail for such purpose.

“(4) TRANSITION.—The regulations of the Bureau under paragraph (1) shall provide for an orderly transition by consumer reporting agencies described in section 603(p) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681a(p)] to the centralized source for consumer report

distribution required by section 612(a)(1)(B) [15 U.S.C. 1681j(a)(1)(B)], as amended by this section, in a manner that—

“(A) does not temporarily overwhelm such consumer reporting agencies with requests for disclosures of consumer reports beyond their capacity to deliver; and

“(B) does not deny creditors, other users, and consumers access to consumer reports on a time-sensitive basis for specific purposes, such as home purchases or suspicions of identity theft, during the transition period.

“(5) TIMING.—Regulations required by this subsection shall—

“(A) be issued in final form not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 4, 2003]; and

“(B) become effective not later than 6 months after the date on which they are issued in final form.

“(6) SCOPE OF REGULATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau shall, by rule, determine whether to require a consumer reporting agency that compiles and maintains files on consumers on substantially a nationwide basis, other than one described in section 603(p) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681a(p)], to make free consumer reports available upon consumer request, and if so, whether such consumer reporting agencies should make such free reports available through the centralized source described in paragraph (1)(A).

“(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—Before making any determination under subparagraph (A), the Bureau shall consider—

“(i) the number of requests for consumer reports to, and the number of consumer reports generated by, the consumer reporting agency, in comparison with consumer reporting agencies described in subsections (p) and (w) [now (x)] of section 603 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681a(p), (w) [x]];

“(ii) the overall scope of the operations of the consumer reporting agency;

“(iii) the needs of consumers for access to consumer reports provided by consumer reporting agencies free of charge;

“(iv) the costs of providing access to consumer reports by consumer reporting agencies free of charge; and

“(v) the effects on the ongoing competitive viability of such consumer reporting agencies if such free access is required.”

[For definitions of terms used in section 211(d) of Pub. L. 108-159, set out above, see section 2 of Pub. L. 108-159, set out as a Definitions note under section 1681 of this title.]

### **§ 1681k. Public record information for employment purposes**

#### **(a) In general**

A consumer reporting agency which furnishes a consumer report for employment purposes and which for that purpose compiles and reports items of information on consumers which are matters of public record and are likely to have an adverse effect upon a consumer's ability to obtain employment shall—

(1) at the time such public record information is reported to the user of such consumer report, notify the consumer of the fact that public record information is being reported by the consumer reporting agency, together with the name and address of the person to whom such information is being reported; or

(2) maintain strict procedures designed to insure that whenever public record information which is likely to have an adverse effect

on a consumer's ability to obtain employment is reported it is complete and up to date. For purposes of this paragraph, items of public record relating to arrests, indictments, convictions, suits, tax liens, and outstanding judgments shall be considered up to date if the current public record status of the item at the time of the report is reported.

#### **(b) Exemption for national security investigations**

Subsection (a) does not apply in the case of an agency or department of the United States Government that seeks to obtain and use a consumer report for employment purposes, if the head of the agency or department makes a written finding as prescribed under section 1681b(b)(4)(A) of this title.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VI, § 613, as added Pub. L. 91-508, title VI, § 601, Oct. 26, 1970, 84 Stat. 1133; amended Pub. L. 105-347, § 4(b), Nov. 2, 1998, 112 Stat. 3210.)

### **Editorial Notes**

#### **AMENDMENTS**

1998—Pub. L. 105-347 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and added subsec. (b).

### **Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT**

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-347 deemed to have same effective date as amendments made by section 2403 of Pub. L. 104-208, see section 7 of Pub. L. 105-347, set out as a note under section 1681a of this title.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Section effective upon the expiration of one hundred and eighty days following Oct. 26, 1970, see section 504(d) of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 91-508, set out as a note under section 1681 of this title.

### **§ 1681l. Restrictions on investigative consumer reports**

Whenever a consumer reporting agency prepares an investigative consumer report, no adverse information in the consumer report (other than information which is a matter of public record) may be included in a subsequent consumer report unless such adverse information has been verified in the process of making such subsequent consumer report, or the adverse information was received within the three-month period preceding the date the subsequent report is furnished.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VI, § 614, as added Pub. L. 91-508, title VI, § 601, Oct. 26, 1970, 84 Stat. 1133.)

### **Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Section effective upon the expiration of one hundred and eighty days following Oct. 26, 1970, see section 504(d) of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 91-508, set out as a note under section 1681 of this title.

### **§ 1681m. Requirements on users of consumer reports**

#### **(a) Duties of users taking adverse actions on basis of information contained in consumer reports**

If any person takes any adverse action with respect to any consumer that is based in whole