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Sent: Tuesday, August 03, 2004 2:27 PM
To: FCRAnotices
Cc: Blannaman
Subject: FACTA Notices, Matter No. R411013 - comment submission

William J. Lannaman

FL

Dear FTC

In my identity theft situation, the contributor was the "pre-approved" credit card mailings. While serving in the Air Force at a remote tour location, my ex-wife used these mailings to establish several credit cards in my name. The total cost to me was approx \$24K; however, the real damage was the elimination of my ability to obtain life-necessary credit upon my return. Until this fraud had occurred, I had a pristine credit rating.

After my return, I found several credit card lines had been established using pre-approved mail applications. The credit card companies absolutely refused to believe I had not been a party to this situation. I spoke with several lawyers who stated that since I did not sign any applications, there was not a binding agreement. However, these statements were worthless as my credit report was scarred with fraud.

I was not the only fraud victim in my family. As a military member returning from overseas, I desperately needed to purchase a vehicle and secure housing for me and my four children. As my ability to get any credit was destroyed, I had

to spend what little cash I had saved to buy an insufficient sized but affordable vehicle. Buying a home was now out of the question, so, while waiting for military housing, my four children and I lived in a cramped one room efficiency apartment for two months; it was all I could afford. I expended all our family savings to scrape through those extremely hard times.

The credit reporting agencies do little to help anyone who was in my situation. I was told to add fraud statements but these mean nothing to potential creditors. And, although most of this has been cleared up, traces of the fraud still pepper my life and credit reports.

Ultimately I hold the credit card companies responsible for the extreme hard times my family and I suffered. Had they not provided a means for someone to sign as me, this would never have occurred. Pre-approved credit applications in their current form must change or stop! I don't understand why no proof of identity is required in the form of Notary action or in-person verification. Currently, credit card companies use phone calls or mail in applications for approval and this is completely insufficient to protect the public. The irony is that now as my credit rating has been cleared up, my current wife and I receive at least fifteen pre-approved credit card mailings a month. We each only have one credit card and we do not carry any balances.

Some solutions I would like to see include the following:

#1 – Eliminate pre-approved credit card mailings, or require better identity verification procedures. Better identity verification procedures would protect both the public and the companies involved.

#2 – Provide some form of protection or indemnification for military members returning from service overseas. Often, military members become victims of spouses, ex-spouses, neighbors, or even family members. These members often return from overseas with limited financial resources and becoming another fraud victim statistic is an injustice. I would suggest the credit reporting agencies offer a program to more tightly control credit information for military members who are deployed or stationed overseas. Military members should be able to lockout their credit information until they return.

I feel confident the FTC will provide affirmative solutions to this destructive crime. I look forward to hearing from the FTC and am available for more information.

Sincerely

William J. Lannaman