

From: Stefanie Milstead
Subject: Electronic Fund Transfers

Comments:

In response to a USA Today article regarding overdraft fees:

I am with Bank of America and have recently had an overdraft incident. A check I wrote was encoded incorrectly by the recipient for an amount much larger than I actually had in the bank, and it was allowed to go through. I was not notified of having a negative balance or for unusual account activity and I was charged an overdraft fee. Luckily I will not have to pay this in the end, but to think they charge the consumer for an error that is not a consumer's fault, and that they would not even contact them, is absurd. This situation could also be avoided if banks would simply deny payments (of course then there would be a bounced check fee, which *should* be able to be removed in a case like mine), but they all opt for automatic overdraft protection. Or they just don't monitor accounts.

I believe that these policies need changing. Banks will not protect our money because in the end the consumer is responsible for the bank's mistakes. And certain things, again like what happened to me, are out of our control even if we check our balances every day and spend responsibly.

I propose moving to a system where if you can't pay, you don't, even if there is enough in your savings. Card purchases should be denied *without* a fee; you are simply unable to cover the bill. This also applies in the case of credit cards. They have a limit, so why don't they max out rather than keep charging? They allow this to capitalize on these fees. The current system we have now also allows identity thieves to go much farther with your money, and with occurrences on the rise we should be open to change.

I also suggest that banks do not automatically enroll customers in overdraft protection. If customers want this, they must opt-in. Otherwise, deny payment/withdrawal.

Thank you,
-Stefanie Milstead