

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



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Governor, Legislators Introduce New Protections Against Identity Theft
Senator Prozanski and state officials devised new safeguards in collaboration with businesses, consumers, law enforcement and local governments

Salem — Governor Ted Kulongoski, Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) and Representative Larry Galizio (D-Tigard), flanked by fellow lawmakers, business leaders, and consumer advocates, announced today a new legislative package to strengthen protections for Oregonians against identity theft.

The Oregon Consumer Identity Protection Act (Senate Bill 583) creates new standards for safeguarding personal information, ensures that consumers are notified promptly if the security of their information has been compromised, and gives the public the right to freeze their credit files if they become a victim of identity theft.

“Identity theft remains a major problem plaguing Oregon families and businesses alike. Once a victim discovers a crime has been committed, it can sometimes take years to clear up the damage,” said Governor Kulongoski. “Today we are introducing legislation that will help protect consumers and give them the tools to take back control of their credit.”

A work group led by Senator Prozanski and the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) met for seven months in 2006 to craft SB 583, which was introduced by Senator Prozanski at the request of the Governor. The group included legislators and representatives from businesses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement, and state agencies.

“We came to the table with a variety of opinions, but we were able to come to a consensus on a bill we believe will play a significant role in decreasing identity theft and helping Oregonians protect their finances,” Senator Prozanski said.

Senator Prozanski will begin legislative consideration of the bill in a public hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee in Eugene on Friday, March 9. The hearing begins at noon and will be at Harris Hall, 125 East 8th Ave., Eugene.

Specifically, SB 583 establishes the following protections:

- *Safeguards personal information.* SB 583 requires businesses and organizations that collect personal information from an individual, such as driver's license numbers or Social Security numbers, to have reasonable safeguards to protect the security and confidentiality of the personal information.
- *Protects Social Security numbers.* SB 583 prohibits the public display or disclosure of more than the last four digits of a Social Security number.
- *Notification of a breach.* The bill requires businesses to notify individuals whose personal information was subject to a security breach in the most expedient time possible, consistent with the needs of law enforcement.
- *Right to a security freeze.* SB 583 gives any Oregonian the right to request a security freeze on his or her credit file maintained by a credit reporting agency.
- *Enforcement.* The bill gives the Department of Consumer and Business Services the ability to enforce the law.

For additional information on SB 583, go to:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measure/sb0500.dir/sb0583.intro.html>

“The creation of this bill was truly a collaborative effort,” said Representative Galizio, who also was involved in the work group. “Oregonians in my district and across the state face the threat of identity theft and I believe that every member of the Legislature has an interest in passing these protections.”

In 2006, more than 2,800 Oregonians were victims of identity theft, ranking Oregon 13th in the nation per capita, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Identity theft victims may incur damaged credit records, unauthorized charges on credit cards, and unauthorized withdrawals from bank accounts.

The proposal builds on Governor Kulongoski's previous efforts to fight identity theft in his first term. In 2003, he signed into law legislation limiting the disclosure of credit card numbers on customers' receipts and expanding criminal penalties for identity theft. And in the 2005 legislative session, he won an expansion of criminal penalties for elder abuse to include financial fraud and identity theft.

“We will continue to fight identity theft and its debilitating affect on Oregonian's financial wellbeing,” said the Governor. “I appreciate the hard work of Senator Prozanski

and the members of the work group in finding agreement on addressing this problem that affects communities across the state.”

A fact sheet on the Oregon Consumer Identity Protection Act:
<http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/letters/SB583.pdf>

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