

## Johnny Ellis Joins Bipartisan Effort to Combat Identity Theft

Recently, Choicepoint Incorporated, a Georgia based financial database company admitted that the personal information of almost 150,000 consumers was stolen. Though the company knew of the theft since last fall, the consumers, including 251 Alaskans, were not informed of the security breach until this spring. In my opinion, that is not acceptable corporate behavior.

When your personal information is compromised, thieves can attempt to open new lines of credit in your name and if successful, can ruin your credit and cost you thousands of dollars. These criminals can literally ruin a person's life

In order to combat the growing problem of identity theft I have, along with Representative Les Gara (D – Anchorage), and Representative John Coghill (R – North Pole) have introduced legislation that protects Alaskan consumer's private information. Senator Gretchen Guess (D – Anchorage) has introduced similar legislation.

SB 148 and HB 226 consist of two sections, both based on California statutory provisions. The first would make it mandatory that companies doing business in Alaska notify consumers if their credit and personal information has been breached. This notification applies to businesses based in Alaska, as well as companies in the lower 48 with Alaskan customers.

The second section of this bill contains a "security freeze" provision that would allow an Alaskan consumer to "freeze" their personal information. If a consumer chooses to enact a security freeze, they can mail the three financial information clearinghouses (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion) and request a freeze that would prevent them from sharing your information. With the freeze in place you, the consumer, can regulate who is eligible to receive a copy of your credit report using an access code you establish at the time of the freeze. Would-be identity thieves would not be able to open a new account without your code, making it impossible to open an account in your name.

Companies like Choicepoint Inc. make a very good profit by selling your personal consumer information. Alaskans deserve the right to protect their personal information, and equally deserve the right to know if that information has been breached.

Please feel free to contact my office in Juneau regarding this piece of legislation at 1-888-330-3704. Let's keep in touch!

<http://ellis.akdemocrats.org>