

law enforcement community. They are the men and women who spend each day on the front lines of battle, protecting communities and ensuring a safer society. Lt. Lawrence Garlock is the personification of what a law enforcement officer should be and should be used as an example of the type of officer every new officer should strive to become. I am truly honored to pay him his tribute.

That's just the way it is.

CREDIT REPORTS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, My esteemed colleagues, thank you very much for the opportunity to talk to you about an important issue involving credit reports that will disproportionately harm low-income home buyers and put most small independent credit reporting agencies out of business within a month. The issue involves the "joint use" of credit reports for mortgages.

"Joint use", "secondary use" or "reissue" refers to the long-standing practice recognized in the FCRA, by the Federal Trade Commission, and by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which allows a credit report to be jointly used by multiple entities legitimately engaged with the origination of a mortgage at no additional cost. Joint use of credit report information is essential for the proper functioning of the mortgage banking, brokerage and financing industries and is an important process by which consumers shop for and obtain mortgage credit.

Recently, two of the credit repositories, Equifax and Experian, E&E have announced new mandatory fees and burdensome requirements for joint use of credit reports starting January 1, 2007. Consumers will now be burdened with paying multiple charges for the one-time access of their credit report in order to originate a single mortgage transaction. Unlike other credit industries, the mortgage credit reporting industry is required to depend on three-file merged credit reports provided by E&E and TransUnion. The proposed new policy will significantly increase mortgage origination costs. Costs for joint use of credit reports potentially increase by 100–300 percent. E&E will significantly increase their revenues while end users, resellers, and ultimately, consumers will pay the costs. In addition, consumers facing the highest cost increases will be those with credit challenges such as low income and first time homebuyers.

Further, about ninety percent of the independent credit reporting agencies will be unable to meet the additional contractual requirements being dictated by E&E. These credit-reporting agencies will be unable to access the credit data from E&E and therefore unable to provide the mandatory three-file merged credit reports. They will quickly be forced out of businesses due to these changes.

There is no new legislation, court case, regulatory decision or other external event to justify such action except to increase the revenues of these large companies at the expense of the consumer and to the detriment of small credit reporting companies.

The other repositories, TransUnion and Innovis, have not chosen to drastically alter

the joint use procedure. TransUnion is evaluating its position and CBC Companies, the parent of Innovis, is challenging E&E's proposed new guidelines in federal court as a violation of U.S. antitrust laws.

The end user disclosure, joint use, requirements have been working well since they were enacted as part of the FCRA in 1997. The recent actions by E&E do little to combat the incidence of identity theft and increase data security. The main reason for these policies is to raise revenue and decrease competition. The effort to implement these new reissue/joint use procedures and fees needs to be stopped in order to maintain a level playing field, continue effective competition in the marketplace and provide fair and equitable access to capital for all Americans.

Any efforts by the major credit repositories to change the reissue process should not restrict competition. In order to protect both consumers and small, independent credit reporting agencies, E&E should make the following changes to their proposed reissue policies.

Continue to classify the GSEs, HUD and any other ancillary technology system that is part of the mortgage origination process as joint use, not the new created "reissue" or "secondary use" classification;

Allow credit-reporting agencies, at the direction of the end user of record, to reissue to any firm on one of the approved mortgage seller or servicer lists of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or HUD without end user documentation and site inspections; and

Designate a reasonable flat fee for reissue. Note: The changes to the 2003 FACT Act which included a free credit report to every American on an annual basis only required an \$.11 per file price increase while E&E's proposed policy changes attempt to justify the charge of \$1.05 to \$3.50 per file.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this important topic. I strongly suggest that E&E reconsider the policies they plan to implement on January 1. Such policies will ultimately hurt the consumer and will have a disproportionate effect on low-income individuals. All Americans deserve the right to pursue the American dream of homeownership and should not be restricted to access to loans because of a policy intended solely to raise revenue for two large credit repositories.

PETER MORTON EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH TESTIMONIAL

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I recently attended an event on stem cell research in Minnesota and had the opportunity to hear patient advocate, Peter Morton, speak. Mr. Morton shared his moving story which highlights the importance of expanding embryonic stem cell research. Stem cell research provides millions of Americans and their families with hope for a life without the pain and suffering that accompanies currently incurable diseases such as juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and spinal cord injuries.

Expanding this vital research must be a priority for Congress. I submit an edited version of Peter Morton's statement to the RECORD

today as a valuable and powerful testimony to the need for this critical research.

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH TESTIMONIAL

10/17/06

Like more than 250,000 Americans, I am paralyzed from a spinal cord injury.

I've been paralyzed from the neck down and ventilator dependent since a bike riding accident in 1995. I wasn't going fast and the trail wasn't difficult. Likely due to some mud on the trail, my front tire slipped, and in an instant I was on the ground with a broken neck, paralyzed and unable to breathe. If not for quick action by my brother, I would not have survived. That day, I lost the lottery. Tomorrow, it could just as easily be you.

When I awoke the next day in the hospital, I couldn't move, I couldn't feel, my head was in traction, and I had tubes in my nose and mouth. All I could do was blink. In an instant I had lost all my cherished independence, having to rely on others for everything from simply a drink of water to all the indignities of one's morning routine.

Most people understand that paralysis means you can't move. What they don't realize is that it also means you can't feel. Further, all the body's systems are affected, causing temperature and blood pressure instability as well as sexual, bowel, and bladder dysfunction. In spite of all this, do you know what the toughest part for me is now? . . . not being able to touch my kids.

Now, more than any other time in history, there is hope. Embryonic stem cells hold the possibility of replacing the cells killed by the injury. Very promising studies are being performed around the world that demonstrate the potential of embryonic stem cells to solve paralysis and many other devastating illnesses. For humanitarian reasons, we simply must pursue this potential.

There is one other point that must be made. I cut my teeth in the business world. When I was injured, I was the CFO of a major brokerage operations company. In addition to their humanitarian benefit, stem cells have the potential to be the next medical industrial revolution. America has always been the leader in medical technology. Minnesota in particular has been called Medical Alley. America and Minnesota need to be leading the way in stem cell research, not sitting on the sidelines, watching the rest of the world pass us by.

In closing, let me offer this: A generation ago, pioneers in medical research developed in vitro fertilization, a technique that has now enabled my wife and me to have two beautiful children. My kids are living examples of the power of medical research.

I do not support slowing down the discoveries this research offers to millions, and allowing other countries to surpass America's leadership in medical technology.

That's why I am speaking out now, for the next generation. I don't want my children or anybody else's children to be told one day, "You are paralyzed, and will never move again."

I support those who champion this important research and thank them for helping change the future.

GEORGETOWN HONORS FATHER ROBERT DRINAN

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on October 23 one of the most accomplished