

issuer has authorized that charge either in advance or at the time of a purchase.

And the bill would prohibit the use of “universal default” clauses—provisions that allow card issuers to impose a new, higher interest rate on a credit card account if there has been any change for the worse in the cardholder’s credit score—even if the change is unrelated to the credit card account. Under “universal default,” a card holder can be saddled with such an increased rate not only for being late on big-ticket items such as a car or a mortgage payment, but for something as relatively minor as being late (even once) on some other credit card, or a utility payment, carrying too much debt overall, having “too much” available credit and open trade lines, making “too many” credit inquiries, or getting a new mortgage or car loan.

The bill also would limit issuance of credit cards to people under the age of 18. People under that age applying for a credit card will need one of three things—the signature of a parent or guardian willing to take responsibility for the applicant’s debts; information indicating that the applicant has some other means of repaying any debt; or a certification that the applicant has completed a credit counseling course by a qualified nonprofit budget and credit counseling agency. These requirements would apply to issuance of both regular credit cards and college “affinity cards.”

And, finally, the bill increases the amounts people injured by violations of the rules can collect from card issuers.

Madam Speaker, this bill is similar to one I introduced in the 109th Congress. It would take some simple, common-sense steps to stop abusive practices, educate cardholders, and stiffen the penalties for violations. I think it deserves to be enacted.

For the benefit of our colleagues, I am attaching an outline of the bill’s provisions.

OUTLINE OF THE BILL

Section One provides a short title and table of contents. The short title is “Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure Act of 2007 or ‘Credit CARD Act of 2007.’”

Section Two authorizes the Federal Reserve’s Board of Governors to issue rules or publish model forms to implement the bill and the changes it makes in existing law

TITLE I

Title I amends the Truth in Lending Act regarding certain credit-card rates and fees.

Section 101 requires at least 15 days’ notice of certain increases in interest rates and requires card holders to be told of their right to cancel an account before the increases take effect.

Section 102 imposes a freeze on interest-rate terms and fees applicable to accounts closed or cancelled before a scheduled rate increase.

Section 103 bars charging penalty fees for—(1) on-time payments; (2) either full payment of a balance owed or a payment larger than the minimum required amount; or (3) non-use of a card for any particular period of time.

Section 104 bars imposing fees for a purchase that exceeds a credit card’s limit if the lender approves the charge in advance or at the time the card holder makes the purchase.

Section 105 bars “universal default,” meaning the practice of imposing a higher interest rate on a credit card because of a change in a cardholder’s credit score even if that change is unrelated to the credit card account.

TITLE II

Title II amends the Truth in Lending Act’s provisions regarding disclosures to card holders.

Section 201 specifies information that must be provided regarding outstanding balances, required monthly minimum payments, grace periods for avoiding additional charges, and the monthly payments needed to pay off the balance in 36 months.

Section 202 requires that card holders be told the date by which mailed payments must be postmarked to avoid late fees, whether (and by how much) interest rates will be increased because of one or more late payments, whether (and if so, where) a payment can be made in person and when it must be made to avoid late fees (which must be no sooner than one business day before the payment is due).

TITLE III

Title III adds provisions to the Truth in Lending Act dealing with issuing credit cards to people under age 18 and amends the Act’s provisions regarding penalties.

Section 301 requires that a credit card can be issued to someone under 18 only if the application includes either (1) the signature of a parent, legal guardian, spouse, or other person willing and able to be jointly liable for amounts charged on the card before the card holder becomes 18; or (2) financial information showing the applicant has enough independent means to be able to repay amounts charged on the card; or (3) proof that the applicant has completed a credit-counseling course by a nonprofit budget and credit counseling agency meeting certain specified requirements.

Section 302 allows borrowers injured by violations of credit-card rules to collect increased amounts from card issuers. Current law says they can recover at least \$200 but no more than \$2,000. This section would increase that to at least \$500 or twice the amount of an improper finance charge (whichever is higher), with an overall limit of \$5,000 for isolated violations or appropriately higher amounts for established patterns or practices of violations.

Section 303 makes the rules specified in section 301 for regular credit cards apply as well to college “affinity cards” (a card with the logo or name of an institution of higher education in addition to that of the lender) issued to someone under age 18.

HONORING THE FAIR OAKS VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE COMPANY

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Fair Oaks Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, FOVFR, as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Since its inception in 1957, FOVFR has achieved great success. Working alongside career personnel, the company has provided high quality fire, medical, emergency, and support services.

In my experiences with the company, I have seen its unwavering dedication to the Fairfax County community as well as its volunteers’ strong values of unity, performance and personalized delivery.

While FOVFR has admirably served the Fairfax County community for 50 years, their efforts in 2006 were especially notable. During

the past year, volunteers spent 9,613 hours actively responding to emergency situations. Volunteer stand-by units supported the Marine Corps Marathon, the Annual National Down Syndrome Society’s Buddy Walk, various high school band competitions and more.

Company statistics show a growing need for FOVFR’s excellent services. Response levels for basic life support, canteen and command level services all were elevated last year, in certain cases by as much as 30 percent. I am confident that FOVFR will continue to rise to the occasion to meet the needs of their local community in the years to come.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who serve in the Fair Oaks Fire and Rescue Company. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens and congratulate them on their 50th anniversary.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY STATEMENT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, On March 8, men and women around the world celebrated International Women’s Day. Women have certainly made enormous strides but as we celebrate the recent successes of women in leadership here in the United States and abroad, we must not forget the many women and girls who are struggling to assert their human rights.

The reality is that women and girls continue to suffer from discrimination and violence and face enormous obstacles in their ability to succeed in any arena. The reality is that women are still not equal to men.

Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours and produce half of the world’s food, yet earn only 1 percent of the world’s income, and own less than 1 percent of the world’s property.

Harmful traditional practices in many nations, such as dowry murder, honor killings and female genital mutilation continue without signs of abatement. An estimated five thousand women are murdered by family members each year and 2 million girls and women a year are at risk of female genital mutilation.

Trafficking has become a worldwide crisis which involves between 1 and 2 million women and children each year.

While many young women are taking advantage of increased opportunities and graduating from higher education in record numbers, there are many girls around the world whose choices are severely restricted because of their gender. Girls in various countries face severe violence, forced early marriage, and dangerous childbirth.

Early marriage almost always ends formal educational opportunities for girls and it is estimated that in the next decade, 100 million girls will be married before the age of 18. In Africa, more than half of girls do not complete primary school education. Due to early childbirth and poor maternal healthcare, there are