



**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights
and International Operations

GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

Subcommittee on Energy and Resources
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy,
and Human Resources

DEMOCRATIC REGIONAL WHIP

CHAIR, Congressional Entertainment
Industries Caucus

Dear Veteran:

In the wake of the theft of 26.5 million veterans' personal information, my office would like to pass along information from the Veterans Administration (VA) and Consumer Data Industry Association.

VA Call Center

- If you have any questions regarding the theft and the potential compromise of your personal information, contact the VA Call Center. The toll free number is 800-FED-INFO (333-4636). The Call Center will operate from 8 am to 9 pm (EDT), Monday-Saturday, as long as it is needed.

Recommended Steps for Securing Your Identity:

- Your Social Security number can be used by ID thieves to open up fraudulent accounts in your name. Watch for signs that your personal information has been misused: for example, bills that do not arrive on time, receiving credit cards you did not apply for, being denied credit or receiving unfavorable terms like high interest rates for no apparent reason, or being contacted by debt collectors or businesses about merchandise or services you did not buy.
- You can order your free annual credit report online at www.annualcreditreport.com, by calling toll free 877-322-8228, or writing to Annual Credit Report Request Service, Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30384-5281.
- Once you receive your report, review it for suspicious activity like inquiries from companies you did not contact, accounts you did not open, and debt on accounts you cannot explain. Check that other information (address, date of birth, employer) is correct.
- Consider placing a fraud alert on your credit file. To place a fraud alert, call the toll free number of any one of the three nationwide consumer reporting agencies. That agency will inform the other two. This alert can help stop someone from opening new credit accounts in your name. An initial fraud alert stays on you credit report for 90 days. After

90 days, you may extend the fraud alert for an additional 90 days.

Transunion: 800-680-7289; www.transunion.com

Equifax: 877-576-5734; www.equifax.com

Experian: 888-397-3742; www.experian.com

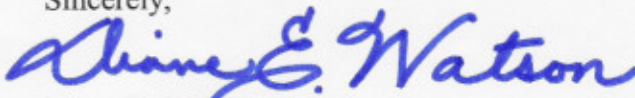
- When you place a fraud alert with one of these three companies, you will receive information about ordering one free credit report from each of the companies. Many people wait about a month from when the information was stolen to order their report because suspicious activity may not appear right away.
- If you learn that your identity has been compromised, file a complaint with the police and with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/idtheft, or call 877-ID-THEFT. The FTC website also has step-by-step instructions on other measures to take, including an ID Theft Affidavit that consumers can use when displaying unauthorized accounts.

For more information visit:

- Identity Theft Tips from the Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov/idtheft
- The U.S. Government's Official Web Portal
www.FirstGov.gov/veteransinfo
- Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

Please contact my office if you need additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress