

Information from Congressman Lynch on Protecting Yourself Against Identity Theft

Dear Friend,

A few weeks ago, a laptop containing the personal identification information of 26.5 million veterans was stolen from a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employee. The employee directly violated VA policies by taking home this information. I am working with my fellow members of Congress to determine how this was allowed to happen and how this type of security breach can be prevented in the future.

If you are a veteran and are concerned that your identity may have been stolen, you can call a special hotline set up by the VA at 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636). If you have any questions, you can also call my Boston Office at 617-428-2000.

Although there have so far been no reports of identity theft as a result, this episode serves

as a reminder of the danger of personal information falling into the wrong hands. There are three simple steps you can take to protect yourself against identity theft.

First, you can deter thieves by ensuring that your personal information is safeguarded. Shred or destroy billing materials before you deposit them in the trash. The second step is to regularly monitor your financial

accounts and monthly credit card statements to detect suspicious activity. It may be advisable to periodically obtain a personal credit report for monitoring purposes. Thirdly, in the event that you suspect illicit activity, you must report it to the proper authorities immediately.

The reverse side of this postcard contains additional information, helpful phone numbers and websites to assist you. If you have further questions, please contact our Boston Office at 1-617-428-2000 or our Brockton Office at 1-508-586-5555 or call the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357.

**U.S. Rep.
Stephen F.
Lynch**



Sincerely,



STEPHEN F. LYNCH

Congressman, 9th District, Massachusetts

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY:

1. Safeguard your information.

- Shred financial statements and other documents with your personal information.
- Only give out your Social Security number when absolutely necessary.
- Use caution when giving out personal information.
- Keep tax records and other personal documents in locked files.

2. Monitor your financial accounts.

- Get a free credit report once a year at www.AnnualCreditReport.com
- Check every bank and credit card statement for unknown purchases.
- Cancel unnecessary credit cards.
- Reduce preapproved credit offers by calling 1-888-5OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688).

3. Report suspicious activity as soon as you detect it.



U.S. Rep. Stephen F. Lynch

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR IDENTITY HAS BEEN STOLEN:

1. Report the theft to the Federal Trade Commission.

- Online: www.ftc.gov/idtheft
- Over the phone: 1-877-438-4338
- Via Mail: Consumer Response Center, FTC
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20580

2. Place a fraud alert on your credit.

- Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
www.equifax.com
- Experian: 1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com
- TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289
www.transunion.com

3. Close accounts that may have been tampered with.

4. File a report with your local Police Department.

