**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976 BY ADDING SECTION 37‑20‑161, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD A CLASS OF PROTECTED CONSUMERS FROM BECOMING VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT, TO ALLOW REPRESENTATIVES WITH SUFFICIENT PROOF OF AUTHORITY TO PLACE A PREEMPTIVE SECURITY FREEZE ON PROTECTED CONSUMER’S CREDIT REPORTS, TO PROVIDE LIMITATIONS, TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT A SECURITY FREEZE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE DURATION AND EXTENT OF A SECURITY FREEZE, AND TO PROVIDE TERMS FOR REMOVAL OF A SECURITY FREEZE ON A PROTECTED CONSUMER’S CREDIT REPORT OR RECORD.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 20, Title 37 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 37‑20‑161. (A) For purposes of this section:

(1) ‘Protected consumer’ means an individual who is:

(a) under the age of sixteen years at the time a request for the placement of a security freeze is made; or

(b) an incapacitated person or a protected person for whom a guardian or conservator has been appointed.

(2) ‘Record’ means a compilation of information that:

(a) identifies a protected consumer;

(b) is created by a consumer reporting agency solely for the purpose of complying with this section; and

(c) may not be created or used to consider the protected consumer’s credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living for any purpose listed in Section 37‑20‑110(3).

(3) ‘Representative’ means a person who provides to a consumer reporting agency sufficient proof of authority to act on behalf of a protected consumer.

(4) ‘Security freeze’ means:

(a) if a consumer reporting agency does not have a file pertaining to a protected consumer, a restriction that:

(i) is placed on the protected consumer’s record in accordance with this section; and

(ii) prohibits the consumer reporting agency from releasing the protected consumer’s record except as provided in this section; or

(b) if a consumer reporting agency has a file pertaining to the protected consumer, a restriction that:

(i) is placed on the protected consumer’s consumer report in accordance with this section; and

(ii) prohibits the consumer reporting agency from releasing the protected consumer’s consumer report or any information derived from the protected consumer’s consumer report except as provided in this section.

(5) ‘Sufficient proof of authority’ means documentation that shows a representative has authority to act on behalf of a protected consumer and includes:

(a) an order issued by a court of law;

(b) a lawfully executed and valid power of attorney; or

(c) a written, notarized statement signed by a representative that expressly describes the authority of the representative to act on behalf of a protected consumer.

(6) ‘Sufficient proof of identification’ means information or documentation that identifies a protected consumer or a representative of a protected consumer and includes:

(a) a social security number or a copy of a social security card issued by the social security administration;

(b) a certified or official copy of a birth certificate issued by the entity authorized to issue the birth certificate; or

(c) a copy of a driver’s license, an identification card issued by the motor vehicle administration, or any other government issued identification.

(B) This section does not apply to the use of a protected consumer’s consumer report or record by:

(1) a person administering a credit file monitoring subscription service to which:

(a) the protected consumer has subscribed; or

(b) the representative of the protected consumer has subscribed on behalf of the protected consumer;

(2) a person providing the protected consumer or the protected consumer’s representative with a copy of the protected consumer’s consumer report on request of the protected consumer or the protected consumer’s representative; or

(3) a check services or fraud prevention services company that issues:

(a) reports on incidents of fraud; or

(b) authorizations for the purpose of approving or processing negotiable instruments, electronic funds transfers, or similar payment methods;

(4) a deposit account information service company that issues reports regarding account closures due to fraud, substantial overdrafts, automated teller machine abuse, or similar negative information regarding a consumer to inquiring banks or other financial institutions for use only in reviewing a consumer request for a deposit account at the inquiring bank or financial institution.

(C)(1) A consumer reporting agency shall place a security freeze for a protected consumer if:

(a) the consumer reporting agency receives a request from the protected consumer’s representative for the placement of the security freeze under this section; and

(b) the protected consumer’s representative:

(i) submits the request to the consumer reporting agency at the address or other point of contact and in the manner specified by the consumer reporting agency;

(ii) provides to the consumer reporting agency sufficient proof of identification of the protected consumer and the representative;

(iii) provides to the consumer reporting agency sufficient proof of authority to act on behalf of the protected consumer; and

(iv) pays to the consumer reporting agency a fee as provided in subsection (I).

(2) If a consumer reporting agency does not have a file pertaining to a protected consumer when the consumer reporting agency receives a request pursuant to item (1), the consumer reporting agency shall create a record for the protected consumer.

(D) Within thirty days after receiving a request that meets the requirements of subsection (C)(1), a consumer reporting agency shall place a security freeze for the protected consumer.

(E) Unless a security freeze for a protected consumer is removed in accordance with subsection (G) or (J), a consumer reporting agency may not release the protected consumer’s consumer report, any information derived from the protected consumer’s consumer report, or any record created for the protected consumer.

(F) A security freeze for a protected consumer placed under subsection (D) shall remain in effect until:

(1) the protected consumer or the protected consumer’s representative requests the consumer reporting agency to remove the security freeze in accordance with subsection (G); or

(2) the security freeze is removed in accordance with subsection (J).

(G) If a protected consumer or a protected consumer’s representative wishes to remove a security freeze for the protected consumer, the protected consumer or the protected consumer’s representative shall:

(1) submit a request for the removal of the security freeze to the consumer reporting agency at the address or other point of contact and in the manner specified by the consumer reporting agency;

(2) provide to the consumer reporting agency:

(a) in the case of a request by the protected consumer:

(i) proof that the sufficient proof of authority for the protected consumer’s representative to act on behalf of the protected consumer is no longer valid; and

(ii) sufficient proof of identification of the protected consumer; or

(b) in the case of a request by the representative of a protected consumer:

(i) sufficient proof of identification of the protected consumer and the representative; and

(ii) sufficient proof of authority to act on behalf of the protected consumer; and

(3) pay to the consumer reporting agency a fee as provided in subsection (I).

(H) Within thirty days after receiving a request that meets the requirements of subsection (G), the consumer reporting agency shall remove the security freeze for the protected consumer.

(I)(1) Except as provided in item (2), a consumer reporting agency may not charge a fee for any service performed under this section.

(2) A consumer reporting agency may charge a reasonable fee, not exceeding five dollars, for each placement or removal of a security freeze for a protected consumer.

(3) Notwithstanding item (2), a consumer reporting agency may not charge any fee under this section if:

(a) the protected consumer’s representative:

(i) has obtained a report of alleged identity fraud against the protected consumer under Title 16; and

(ii) provides a copy of the report to the consumer reporting agency; or

(b) a request for the placement or removal of a security freeze is for a protected consumer who is under the age of sixteen years at the time of the request; and the consumer reporting agency has a consumer report pertaining to the protected consumer.

(J) A consumer reporting agency may remove a security freeze for a protected consumer or delete a record of a protected consumer if the security freeze was placed or the record was created based on a material misrepresentation of fact by the protected consumer or the protected consumer’s representative.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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