



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Supports Anti-Identity Theft Legislation

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Queens, NY, June 4, 2012 -- In order to help crack down on the crime of identity theft, **New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens) recently voted to pass legislation (S.1411) that would make it a felony to steal a debit card or credit card account number – regardless of whether the actual card is stolen as well.

“Identity thieves don’t have to have actual possession of a plastic debit or credit card to wreak havoc,” said Addabbo. “Many times, all they need to know is the account number in order to start buying things over the phone or going on an online shopping spree. Currently, because of a loophole in New York State law, these thieves can’t be charged with a crime unless they actually have the card itself in their possession.”

The legislation would make it clear that stealing another person's account number with the intent to use it unlawfully, or to let another person use it illegally, would be a crime of grand larceny in the fourth degree, a class E felony.

“As technology has continued to progress, identity thieves have become more skillful when it comes to emptying out the bank accounts of others,” said Addabbo. “Unscrupulous employees may copy account numbers from sales receipts or phone orders. Cards may be entered into devices that store the account information without the knowledge of the customer. People may fall prey to giving their personal credit information out to thieves, believing they are dealing with legitimate businesses. The tricks of the identity theft trade are already abundant and growing everyday.”

Identify theft is an increasing problem, causing severe economic and often emotional distress to its victims. Bank accounts are wiped out, expensive items are bought in the name of victims, and it is often very difficult for those who have been preyed upon to untangle all of the details of the theft and stop it from continuing.

“As criminals become more tech-savvy and inventive with their schemes, we need to make sure that New York State laws are up to the challenge,” said Addabbo. “This legislation should help to send a message to identity thieves that one of their favorite loopholes is going to be closed up.”

Now that it has been approved by the Senate, the legislation has been referred to the Assembly Codes Committee for consideration.

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