



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Outgoing Third District Senator Zeldin Announces Signing of Bill to Protect our Children

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New Law Protects Children from Identity Theft

ALBANY—Outgoing Third District State Senator Lee Zeldin (R, C, I—Shirley), Chair of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee, announced today that his bill aimed at protecting minors from identity theft has been signed into law.

The bill, S. 6682, creates a mechanism whereby parents or guardians can place a freeze on the credit record of a minor in order to prevent their child from becoming a victim of identity theft.

“As the Chair of the Senate’s Consumer Protection Committee, and as a father, I am especially proud to see this bill signed into law,” said Senator Zeldin. “I welcome any opportunity that gives parents the tools to help their children start their lives on sound financial footing.”

Children are especially vulnerable to identity theft as it can carry on undetected for years, until the child applies for student loans, other forms of credit, or a job. According to a 2012

survey of families with children under 18, conducted by the Identity Theft Assistance Center and the Javelin Strategy & Research group, one in forty families had at least one child whose personal information had been compromised.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) advises parents to check their children's credit report for suspicious activity, noting that a child's social security number can be used by identity thieves to apply for government benefits, open bank and credit card accounts, apply for a loan or utility service, or rent a place to live. Further, the FTC advises parents to take immediate action should they find that personal information is being misused. However, current law only allows a parent to freeze their child's credit after a file in their name already exists. Typically, such a file only exists if the child has already been the victim of identity theft.

Senator Zeldin's bill requires credit reporting agencies to allow a parent to freeze their child's credit even when no file exists, thereby averting the potential for identity theft to occur in the first place. This provides parents with a mechanism allowing them to take proactive steps to safeguard their child's identity.

"In our data-driven world where one's personally identifying information is critical to financial health and stability, this bill empowers parents and provides them with the peace-of-mind that comes with knowing you're doing all that you can to set your children up for success," Senator Zeldin continued.

A result of extensive work with businesses and industry professionals, this important law strikes a balance between protecting New York consumers and creating a stable platform for affected businesses.

The bill was sponsored in the Assembly by the Chair of their Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) and becomes effective January 1, 2015.

Press Contact: Jennifer DiSiena (631) 585-0608 or disiena@nysenate.gov