IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN GREEN BAY DIVISION

SANDRA BAZILE, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Case No.: 1:18-cv-00864

ACCOUNT CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC., a New Jersey Corporation,

Defendant.

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff, SANDRA BAZILE, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, by way of this Class Action Complaint against Defendants, ACCOUNT CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC., ("ACS"), by and through her attorneys, says:

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Plaintiff, on her own behalf and on behalf of the class she seeks to represent, brings this action for the illegal practices of ACS who, *inter alia*, used false, deceptive, and misleading practices, and other illegal practices, in connection with its attempts to collect an alleged debt from Plaintiff and other similarly situated Wisconsin consumers.

2. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant's collection practices violate the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq*.

3. The FDCPA regulates the behavior of collection agencies attempting to collect a debt on behalf of another. The U.S. Congress, finding evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors, determined that abusive debt collection practices contribute to a number of personal bankruptcies, marital instability, loss of

jobs, and invasions of individual privacy. Congress enacted the FDCPA to eliminate abusive debt collection practices by debt collectors, to ensure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged, and to promote uniform State action to protect consumers against debt collection abuses. 15 U.S.C. § 1692.

4. The FDCPA is a strict liability statute, which provides for actual or statutory damages upon the showing of one violation. The Seventh Circuit has held that whether a debt collector's conduct violates the FDCPA should be judged from the standpoint of the "unsophisticated debtor." *Gammon v. GC Servs. Ltd. P'ship*, 27 F.3d 1254, 1257 (7th Cir. 1994).

5. To prohibit deceptive practices, the FDCPA, at 15 U.S.C. § 1692e, outlaws the use of false, deceptive, and misleading collection letters and names a non-exhaustive list of certain *per se* violations of false and deceptive collection conduct. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(1)-(16). Among the *per se* violations prohibited by that section are: making a false representation of the character, amount, or legal status of any debt, 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(2)(A); and, using any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a consumer, 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10).

6. Furthermore, the FDCPA, at 15 U.S.C. § 1692g, requires that certain information as to the validation of a debt be provided in a collection letter. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)-(e). Among the *per se* violations prohibited by that section are: failing to provide the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed, 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(2).

7. Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, seeks statutory damages, actual damages, punitive damages, declaratory relief, attorney fees, costs, and all other relief, equitable or legal in nature, as deemed appropriate by this Court, pursuant to the FDCPA, and all other common law or statutory regimes.

II. PARTIES

8. Plaintiff is a natural person.

9. At all times relevant to this lawsuit, Plaintiff is a citizen of, and resides in, the Village of Gresham, Shawano County, Wisconsin.

10. At all times relevant to this complaint, ACS is a for-profit Corporation existing pursuant to the laws of the State of New Jersey.

ACS maintains its principal business address at 85 Chestnut Ridge Road, Suite
 Montvale, New Jersey.

III. JURISDICTION & VENUE

12. Jurisdiction of this Court arises under 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d) and 28 U.S.C.§§ 1331 and 1337.

13. Venue is appropriate in this federal district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) because a substantial part of the events giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred within this federal judicial district, and because ACS is subject to personal jurisdiction in the State of Wisconsin at the time this action is commenced.

IV. FACTS

14. ACS regularly collects, and attempts to collect, defaulted debts incurred, or alleged to have been incurred, for personal, family, or household purposes on behalf of creditors using the U.S. Mail, telephone, and Internet.

15. By letter dated June 7, 2017 ("Letter"), ACS attempted to collect from Plaintiff an allegedly defaulted financial obligation that arose out of a transaction in which the money, property, insurance, or services which were the subject of the transaction were incurred for personal, family, and household purposes.

16. A true copy of the Letter is attached as *Exhibit A* except that the undersigned counsel has, in accordance with Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2, partially redacted the financial account

Case 1:18-cv-00864 Filed 06/06/18 Page 3 of 8 Document 1

numbers to protect Plaintiff's privacy.

17. On information and belief, ACS obtained the financial obligation ("Debt") described in *Exhibit A* for collection purposes after the Debt was in default.

18. *Exhibit A* is the initial letter Plaintiff received from ACS regarding the Debt.

19. On information and belief, *Exhibit A* is a computer-generated, template form that ACS uses as the initial letter it sends consumers to collect debts.

20. *Exhibit A* does not unambiguously identify the name of the creditor of the debt ACS is collecting.

21. *Exhibit A* does not unambiguously identify the name of the creditor of the "account" ACS is collecting.

22. *Exhibit A* does not unambiguously identify the name of the creditor who "listed" the "account" with ACS for collection purposes.

23. *Exhibit A* fails to identify the name of the entity to whom the alleged Debt ACS was collecting is owed.

24. *Exhibit A* instructs the consumer to make their payments payable only to ACS.

25. *Exhibit A* instructs the consumer to remit their payments only to ACS.

26. *Exhibit A* only provides instructions for the consumer to communicate with ACS regarding the alleged Debt.

27. The Letter deprived Plaintiff of truthful, non-misleading, information in connection with ACS's attempt to collect a debt.

V. POLICIES AND PRACTICES COMPLAINED OF

28. It is Defendants' policy and practice to engage in unfair and deceptive acts and practices, in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e and 1692g by sending letters, such as *Exhibit A*, which seek to collect defaulted debts that violate the FDCPA.

VI. CLASS ALLEGATIONS

29. This action is brought as a class action. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and on behalf of all other persons similarly situated pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

30. Plaintiff seeks to certify a class pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a) and (b)(3).

31. This claim is brought on behalf of a Class of all persons to whom ACS mailed a written communication that was not returned as undeliverable, to an address in the State of Wisconsin, during the period of June 7, 2017 through June 28, 2018, in an attempt to collect a defaulted account, which states: (i) "CURRENT CREDITOR(S) ORIGINAL CREDITOR(S)" and lists at least two different names underneath; and (ii) states "[t]his account has been listed with our office for collection."

32. The identities of the Class members are readily ascertainable from ACS's business records.

33. The Class claims include all claims Class members may have for a violation of the FDCPA based on a letter from ACS, such as *Exhibit A*, which seek to collect defaulted debts.

34. This action has been brought, and may properly be maintained, as a class action pursuant to the provisions of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because there is a well-defined community interest in the litigation:

- (a) Numerosity: On information and belief that Class is so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical and includes at least 40 members.
- (b) **Common Questions Predominate:** Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Class and those questions predominate over any questions or issues involving only individual class members. With

respect to the Class, the principal issues are whether ACS's written communications to Wisconsin consumers, such as *Exhibit A*, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e, 1692e(2), 1692e(10), and 1692g(a)(2).

- (c) Typicality: Plaintiff's claims are typical of Class members' claims.
 Plaintiff and all Class members have claims arising from ACS's common course of conduct complained of herein.
- (d) Adequacy: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class members insofar as Plaintiff has no interests that are averse to, or conflict with, absent Class members. Plaintiff is committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiff has also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither Plaintiff nor her counsel have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.

35. Certification of a class under Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is appropriate in that the questions of law and fact common to members of the Class predominate over any questions affecting an individual member, and a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

36. Based on discovery and further investigation (including, but not limited to, ACS's disclosure of class size and net worth), Plaintiff may, in addition to moving for class certification using modified definitions of the class, class claims, and the class period, and/or seek class certification only as to particular issues as permitted under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4). Such modified definitions may be more expansive to include/exclude consumers from the foregoing definitions.

VII. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT

37. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.

- 38. ACS is a "debt collector" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 39. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).
- 40. The Debt is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. \$1692a(5).
- 41. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).
- 42. The Letter was mailed to Plaintiff to collect the Debt.
- 43. The Letter deprived Plaintiff of truthful, non-misleading, information in

connection with ACS's attempt to collect a debt.

- 44. ACS's use of the Letter violated the FDCPA in one or more following ways:
 - (a) Using false, deceptive, and misleading representations or means in connection with the collection of any debt in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e including, but not limited to, violations of §§ 1692e(2), 1692e(5), 1692e(10); and
 - (b) Failing to identify the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(2).

VIII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

45. WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests the Court enter judgment in her favor and in favor of the Class and against as follows:

A. For the FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:

 (i) An order certifying that the First Cause of Action may be maintained as a class pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure including, but not limited to, defining the Class, the class claims, appointing Plaintiff as the class representative, and the undersigned counsel to represent the Class;

- (ii) An award of actual damages for Plaintiff and the Class pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §
 1692k(a)(1);
- (iii) An award of statutory damages for Plaintiff and the Class pursuant to 15 U.S.C.§ 1692k(a)(2)(B);
- (iv) An incentive award for Plaintiff, to be determined by the Court, for Plaintiff's services to the Class;
- (v) Attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C.

§ 1692k(a)(3); and

(vi) For such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

IX. JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff hereby demands that this case be tried before a Jury.

s/Andrew T. Thomasson

Philip D. Stern (NJ Bar # 045921984) Andrew T. Thomasson (NJ Bar # 048362011) STERN•THOMASSON LLP 150 Morris Avenue, 2nd Floor Springfield, NJ 07081-1315 Telephone: (973) 379-7500 Facsimile: (973) 532-5868 E-Mail: philip@sternthomasson.com E-Mail: andrew@sternthomasson.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff, Sandra Bazile

Exhibit A

Case 1:18-cv-00864 Filed 06/06/18 Page 1 of 3 Document 1-1

85 CHESTNUT RIDGE RD SUITE 113 MONTVALE NJ 07645-1827 Telephone's : (201) 767-5300 (800) 482-8026 Fax : (201) 767-7051

85 Chestnut Ridge Rd SUITE 113

Montvale, NJ 07645

ACCOUNT CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC. D.B.A. – A.C.S. 148 IN TEXAS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

ACS Account No. :	Total Due :
8999	\$ 605.45

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This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. This communication is from a debt collector.



Payment Method Options

www.acswebpay.net

1. TO MAKE A PAYMENT ONLINE OR PROPOSE YOUR OWN PAYMENT PLAN 24/7 VISIT OUR VIRTUAL COLLECTOR AT <u>www.acswebpay.net</u>

	ican Express	MaskerCard
1	Amount of Payme	ent: \$
	Signature	
Code:		
4 Digits American Express	3 Digits Discover Card	
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010000 () () () () () () () () () () () () ()		
	American Express	Code: Signature

Call 1-800-482-8026. You will need your checking account # and routing # to complete this transaction.

	Mone	yGram ExpressPayment Instructions
4.	Money Gram "Express Payment" Payable to : Account Control Syste	ems
	Receive Code : 3 0 9 8	
	Account Number:	Attn:
5.	Mail Check or Money order to:	ACS
	Please include your A.C.S.#	85 Chestnut Ridge Rd, Suite 113 Montvale, NJ 07645

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. *(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)* Place an "X" in the appropriate box (required): Green Bay Division Mikawkee Division

Place an X in the appropriate	box (required): 🖾 Green Bay Division	viiiwaukee Di	IVISIOII		
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS SANDRA BAZILE, on bel	half of herself and all others similarly s	ituated	DEFENDANTS ACCOUNT CONTR	ROL SYSTEMS, INC., a	New Jersey Corporation
(E)	of First Listed Plaintiff Shawano XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) Address, and Telephone Number)		County of Residence of NOTE: Attorneys (<i>If Known</i>)	of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES O IN LAND CONDEMNATION C THE TRACT OF LAND INVOL	NLY) ASES, USE THE LOCATION OF VED.
(973) 379-7500					
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	III. CITI	ZENSHIP OF PRI	NCIPAL PARTIES (Pla	ace an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	X 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) PT on of This State		
2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)	Citize	en of Another State	2 2 Incorporated <i>and</i> P of Business In A	
			en or Subject of a	3 3 Foreign Nation	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT					
CONTRACT	TORTS		DRFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
I10 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY PERSONAL INJ 310 Airplane 365 Personal Inju 315 Airplane Product Product Liability 130 Airplane 367 Health Care/ 320 Assault, Libel & Pharmaceutic Slander Personal Inju 330 Federal Employers' Product Liability 340 Marine Injury Product 340 Marine Injury Product 340 Marine 370 Other Fraud 350 Motor Vehicle 371 Truth in Lenc Product Liability 380 Other Personal Injury 380 Other Personal Injury Base Property Dan Injury Resonal Employer 360 Other Personal Property Dan Injury Base Property Dan Natical Malpractice Product Liability 440 Other Civil Rights Habeas Corpus: 441 Voting 463 Alien Detaine 442 Employment 510 Motions to V Accommodations 530 General 445 Amer. w/Disabilities 540 Mandamus & Other S55 Di civil Rights 448 Education 555 Prison Condi 560 Civil Detaine </td <td>URY 62 ry - ility 69 al ry lity sonal ct PERTY 71 ling 72 al mage 74 mage 74 mage 75 lity 79 TONS 79 re acate v 46 c Other 46 tion e -</td> <td>5 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 0 Other D Fair Labor Standards Act 0 Labor/Management Relations 0 Railway Labor Act 1 Family and Medical Leave Act 0 Other Labor Litigation 1 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION 2 Naturalization Application 5 Other Immigration Actions</td> <td>☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ☐ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 ☐ PROPERTY RIGHTS ☐ 820 Copyrights ☐ 830 Patent ☐ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY ☐ 861 HIA (1395ff) ☐ 862 Black Lung (923) ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) ☐ 864 SSID Title XVI ☐ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS ☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) ☐ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609</td> <td> ☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729 (a)) ☐ 400 State Reapportionment ☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking ☐ 450 Commerce ☐ 460 Deportation ☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations ☑ 480 Consumer Credit ☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV ☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange ☐ 890 Other Statutory Actions ☐ 891 Agricultural Acts ☐ 895 Freedom of Information Act ☐ 896 Arbitration ☐ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision ☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes </td>	URY 62 ry - ility 69 al ry lity sonal ct PERTY 71 ling 72 al mage 74 mage 74 mage 75 lity 79 TONS 79 re acate v 46 c Other 46 tion e -	5 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 0 Other D Fair Labor Standards Act 0 Labor/Management Relations 0 Railway Labor Act 1 Family and Medical Leave Act 0 Other Labor Litigation 1 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION 2 Naturalization Application 5 Other Immigration Actions	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ☐ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 ☐ PROPERTY RIGHTS ☐ 820 Copyrights ☐ 830 Patent ☐ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY ☐ 861 HIA (1395ff) ☐ 862 Black Lung (923) ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) ☐ 864 SSID Title XVI ☐ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS ☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) ☐ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	 ☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729 (a)) ☐ 400 State Reapportionment ☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking ☐ 450 Commerce ☐ 460 Deportation ☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations ☑ 480 Consumer Credit ☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV ☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange ☐ 890 Other Statutory Actions ☐ 891 Agricultural Acts ☐ 895 Freedom of Information Act ☐ 896 Arbitration ☐ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision ☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you 15 USC §1692 et seq. Brief description of cause:	_		tes unless diversity):	
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	Claims under Fair Debt Collection CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTIC UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.	DN DI	ct EMAND \$ 00,000.00	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND:	if demanded in complaint: Xes □ No
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions): JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBER	
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	Case 1:18-cv-00864 Filed	06/06/1	L8 Page 1 of 1	Document 1-2	

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the Eastern District of Wisconsin

SANDRA BAZILE, et al.	
Plaintiff(s)	_
V.	
	:
ACCOUNT CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC., a New Jersey Corporation	
Defendant(s)	_ :

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address)

ACCOUNT CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC. c/o Its Registered Agent, Registered Agent Solutions, Inc. 901 South Whitney Way Madison, Wisconsin 53711

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you receive it) – or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(a)(2) or (3) – you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or the plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

Stern Thomasson LLP 150 Morris Avenue, 2nd Floor Springfield, NJ 07081-1315

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

STEPHEN C. DRIES, CLERK OF COURT

Civil Action No. 1:18-cv-00864

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Account Control Systems Tagged with Debt Collection Class Action in Wisconsin</u>