BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

100 Garden City Plaza, Suite 500 Garden City, New York 11530 Tel: (516) 203-7600 Fax: (516) 706-5055 Email: ConsumerRights@BarshaySanders.com Attorneys for Plaintiff Our File No.: 116181

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Andrew Chung, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Docket No:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Nationwide Credit, Inc.,

Defendant.

Andrew Chung, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (hereinafter referred to as "*Plaintiff*"), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against Nationwide Credit, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "*Defendant*"), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* ("FDCPA").

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).

3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC 100 GARDEN CTY PLAZA, SUITE 500 GARDEN CTY, NEW YORK 11530 Case 2:18-cv-06904 Document 1 Filed 12/04/18 Page 2 of 7 PageID #: 2

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Andrew Chung is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Nassau County, New York.

6. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

7. On information and belief, Defendant Nationwide Credit, Inc., is a Pennsylvania Corporation with a principal place of business in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

8. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

9. Defendant is a "debt collector" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

ALLEGATIONS

10. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt ("the Debt").

11. The Debt was primarily for personal, family or household purposes and is therefore a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

12. Sometime after the incurrence of the Debt, Plaintiff fell behind on payments owed.

13. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

14. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letter ("the Letter") dated December 3, 2017. ("<u>Exhibit 1</u>.")

15. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

FIRST COUNT

Violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e False or Misleading Representations as to the Name of the <u>Creditor to Whom the Debt is Owed</u>

16. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the foregoing paragraphs as if fully restated herein.

17. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e prohibits a debt collector from using any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

18. While § 1692e specifically prohibits certain practices, the list is non-exhaustive, and does not preclude a claim of falsity or deception based on any non-enumerated practice.

19. The question of whether a collection letter is deceptive is determined from the

perspective of the "least sophisticated consumer."

20. A collection letter is deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e if it can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate.

21. A collection letter is also deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e if it is reasonably susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer.

22. For purposes of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e, the failure to clearly and accurately identify the creditor to whom the debt is owed is unfair and deceptive to the least sophisticated consumer.

23. The identity of creditor to whom the debt is owed is a material piece of information to a consumer.

24. Knowing the identity of creditor to whom the debt.

25. A debt collector has the obligation not just to convey the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed, but also to convey such clearly.

26. A debt collector has the obligation not just to convey the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed, but also to state such explicitly.

27. Even if a debt collector conveys the required information, the debt collector nonetheless violates the FDCPA if it conveys that information in a confusing or contradictory fashion so as to cloud the required message with uncertainty.

28. When determining whether the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed has been conveyed clearly, an objective standard, measured by how the "least sophisticated consumer" would interpret the notice, is applied.

29. The Letter fails to identify by name and label any entity as "creditor," "original creditor," "current creditor," "account owner," or "creditor to whom the debt is owed."

30. The Letter states, "Re: CHASE BANK USA, N.A."

31. The Letter fails to indicate whether the "Re:" refers to the account owner.

32. The Letter fails to indicate whether the "Re:" refers to Plaintiff's creditor.

33. The Letter fails to indicate whether the "Re:" refers to Plaintiff's current creditor.

34. The Letter fails to indicate whether the "Re:" refers to Plaintiff's original creditor.

35. The Letter fails to indicate whether the "Re:" refers to the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

36. The Letter fails to indicate who referred the account to Defendant.

37. The Letter fails to indicate who Defendant represents.

38. The Letter fails to indicate who is Defendant's client.

39. The Letter indicates that if a payment is made it should be made to Defendant.

40. Defendant failed to explicitly state the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

41. Defendant failed to clearly state the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

42. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be confused as to the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

43. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be uncertain as to the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

44. Because the Letter can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate, as described, it is deceptive within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

45. Because the Letter is reasonably susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer, as described, it is deceptive within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

46. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be deceived by the Letter.

47. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be deceived in a material way by the Letter.

48. Defendant violated § 1692e by using a false, deceptive and misleading representation in its attempt to collect a debt.

SECOND COUNT Violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e

49. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the foregoing paragraphs as if fully restated herein.

50. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e prohibits the use of any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

51. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) prohibits the use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a consumer.

52. The Letter contains a settlement offer that expired December 18, 2017.

53. While a settlement offer in and of itself is not improper, such offer runs afoul of

BARSHAY | SANDERS PILC 100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500 GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530 the FDCPA if it impresses upon the least sophisticated consumer that if she does not pay by the settlement deadline, she will have no further opportunity to settle her debt for less than the full amount.

54. Upon being presented with such offer, the least sophisticated consumer could be materially misled into remitting payment or entering into a repayment plan she may not be able to afford, for fear of being subjected to additional collection efforts for the full amount of the debt when, in fact, settlement offers are frequently renewed if the consumer fails to accept the initial offer.

55. It has been held that these concerns can be adequately addressed by the debt collector's including with the offer the following language: "We are not obligated to renew this offer." *Evory v. RJM Acquisitions Funding L.L.C.*, 505 F.3d 769, 776 (7th Cir. 2007).

56. The phrase "we are not obligated to renew this offer" adequately conveys to the least sophisticated consumer that there is a renewal possibility, but also that it is not assured.

57. The Letter does not state "we are not obligated to renew this offer," nor does it include any kind of substantially similar language.

58. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be misled by the settlement offers.

59. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be misled in a material way by the settlement offers.

60. Defendant has violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e by way of using a false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in its attempt to collect Plaintiff's Debt.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

61. Plaintiff brings this action individually and as a class action on behalf of all persons similarly situated in the State of New York from whom Defendant attempted to collect a consumer debt by sending a collection letter that includes a settlement offer, but does not include the language "We are not obligated to renew this offer," from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.

62. This action seeks a finding that Defendant's conduct violates the FDCPA, and asks that the Court award damages as authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

63. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.

64. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to

collect delinquent consumer debts by sending a collection letter that includes a settlement offer, but does not include the language "We are not obligated to renew this offer."

65. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Class. Common questions of law or fact raised by this class action complaint affect all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. Common relief is therefore sought on behalf of all members of the Class. This class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.

66. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, and a risk that any adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class would, as a practical matter, either be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class not party to the adjudication, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests. Defendant has acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that declaratory relief is warranted.

67. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect and represent the interests of the Class. The management of the class action proposed is not extraordinarily difficult, and the factual and legal issues raised by this class action complaint will not require extended contact with the members of the Class, because Defendant's conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in actions brought under consumer protection laws.

JURY DEMAND

68. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

a. Certify this action as a class action; and

b. Appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative of the Class, and Plaintiff's attorneys as Class Counsel; and

c. Find that Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and

6

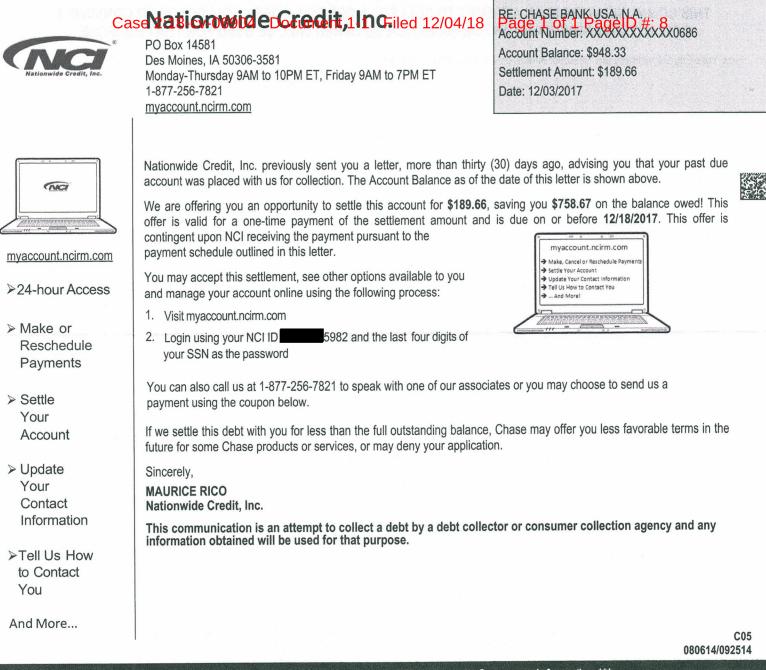
d. Grant damages against Defendant pursuant to 15 U.S.C. $\$ 1692k; and

- e. Grant Plaintiff's attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- f. Grant Plaintiff's costs; together with
- g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: December 3, 2018

BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

By: <u>/s/ Craig B. Sanders</u> Craig B. Sanders, Esq. 100 Garden City Plaza, Suite 500 Garden City, New York 11530 Tel: (516) 203-7600 Fax: (516) 706-5055 csanders@barshaysanders.com *Attorneys for Plaintiff* Our File No.: 116181



*** Please See Reverse Side of This Letter for Important Consumer Information ***

Please Detach and Return this Stub in the Enclosed Envelope with your Check or Money Order - Make Sure the "Remit to" Address appears in the Window

02306

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL PO Box 10354

Des Moines, IA 50306-0354

002/C05/103/12/03/2017//NY

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70027-5A9*AUTO**ALL FOR AADC 110 Andrew D Chung 197 LOCUST ST # 1 Floral Park NY 11001-3319

(ACCOUNT NUMBER:	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX0686
	NCI ID:	5982
	ACCOUNT BALANCE:	\$948.33
	AMOUNT ENCLOSED:	

24-hour account access: <u>https://myaccount.ncirm.com</u> o Change of address: Print New Address on Back

REMIT TO:

JS 44 (Rev. 01/29/201 ase 2:18-cv-06904 Copyment of 2 Page 1 of 2 Page 1 of 2 Page 1 #: 9

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 provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS								
ANDREW CHUI		NATIONWIDE CREDIT, INC.									
(b) County of Residence of <i>(E)</i>	First Listed Plaintiff KCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA	NASSAU ASES)		County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.							
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	ddress, and Telephone Numbe	er)		Attorneys (If Known)							
BARSHAY SAND 100 Garden City P											
(516) 203-7600 II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in (One Box Only)	II. CIT	TIZENSHIP O	F PF	RINCIPA	L PARTIES	Place an "X" in	One Box for	r Plaintiff	
		.,		iversity Cases Only)			Υ.		Box for Defend	dant)	
O 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	• 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)	Not a Party)	Citizer	n of This State	PT 0 1		Incorporated or Pri of Business In T		PIF O 4	DEF O 4	
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant	O 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenshi	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State C			2 0 2	Incorporated and P of Business In A		O 5	O 5	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(D]			n or Subject of a reign Country	0 3	3 O 3	Foreign Nation		0 6	O 6	
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Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) O 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits O 160 Stockholders' Suits O 190 Other Contract O 195 Contract Product Liability O 196 Franchise	 O 340 Marine O 345 Marine Product Liability O 350 Motor Vehicle O 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability O 360 Other Personal Injury O 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice 	Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY O 370 Other Fraud O 371 Truth in Lending O 380 Other Personal Property Damage O 385 Property Damage Product Liability	O 720 1 O 740 1 O 751 1	LABOR Fair Labor Standards Act Labor/Management Relations Railway Labor Act Family and Medical Leave Act Other Labor Litigation		O 861 HIA O 862 Blacl	c Lung (923) C/DIWW (405(g)) Title XVI	 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 			
REAL PROPERTY O 210 Land Condemnation	CIVIL RIGHTS O 440 Other Civil Rights	PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus:		Employee Retirement			AL TAX SUITS s (U.S. Plaintiff	O 899 Admin			
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V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in • 1 Original Proceeding O 2 Remon Con	oved from State O 3 Ren	11	Reinstate Reope		ther D		O 6 Multidistrict Litigation – Transfer	I	Aultidistrict Litigation – Direct File		
		atute under which you are f	iling (D	o not cite jurisdiction	al stat	utes unless d	liversity): 15 USC	§1692			
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	N Brief description of cat	ise:		15 U	JSC §	1692 Fair I	Debt Collection Pra	actices Act Vie	olation		
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	• CHECK IF THIS IS UNDER RULE 2	S A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	DE	MAND \$	CHECK YES only if demanded in JURY DEMAND: • Yes O			-	nt:		
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	E(S)	JUDGE		(See Instructions) DOCKET NUMBER							
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTOR	RNEY O	F RECORD							
December 4, 2018 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	/s Craig Sanders	3									
RECEIPT #AM	IOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDO	ЪЕ		MAG. JUI	DGE			

Case 2:18-cv-06904 Document 1-2 Filed 12/04/18 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: 10 CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

Case is Eligible for Arbitration

I, _____, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for

compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
- the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
- the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more or its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that "A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

1.)	Is the civ	il acti	on being	g filed	in the Ea	astern D	District I	removed	from a	a New Y	York St	ate Co	ourt lo	cated in	Nassau	i or Si	uffolk
	County:		Yes		No												

2.) If you answered "no" above:

a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk

County? ■ Yes □ No

b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? ■ Yes □ No

c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specific the County in which the offending communication was received: NASSAU

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County? <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court. Yes D No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?

Yes (If yes, please explain)

No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: <u>/s Craig B. Sanders</u>

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Andrew Chung, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,)))	
<i>Plaintiff(s)</i>)	
V.) Civil Action N	0.
Nationwide Credit, Inc.,)	

Defendant(s)

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) Nationwide Credit, Inc. C/O CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY 80 STATE STREET ALBANY, NEW YORK, 12207-2543

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received 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 plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

BARSHAY SANDERS PLLC 100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500 GARDEN CITY, NY 11530

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.

CLERK OF COURT

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>Class Action Filed Against Nationwide Credit Over Allegedly Misleading Collection Notice</u>