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Attorneys for Plaintiff,
Taneesha Crooks

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

**TANEESHA CROOKS,
Individually and On Behalf of All
Others Similarly Situated,**

Plaintiff,

v.

**CMRE FINANCIAL SERVICES,
INC.,**

Defendant.

Case No.: '17CV0270 H JLB

CLASS ACTION

**COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF PURSUANT
TO THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER
PROTECTION ACT, 47 U.S.C. § 227,
ET SEQ.**

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

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INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff TANEESHA CROOKS (“Plaintiff”) brings this Class Action Complaint for damages, injunctive relief, and any other available legal or equitable remedies, resulting from the illegal actions of defendant CMRE Financial Services, Inc. (hereinafter, referred to as “Defendant”) in negligently and/or willfully or knowingly contacting Plaintiff on Plaintiff’s cellular telephone, in violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*, (“TCPA”), thereby invading Plaintiff’s privacy. Plaintiff alleges as follows upon personal knowledge as to herself and her own acts and experiences, and, as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by her attorney.
2. The TCPA was designed to prevent calls like the ones described within this complaint, and to protect the privacy of citizens like Plaintiff. “Voluminous consumer complaints about abuses of telephone technology – for example, computerized calls dispatched to private homes – prompted Congress to pass the TCPA.” *Mims v. Arrow Fin. Servs., LLC*, 132 S. Ct. 740, 744 (2012).
3. In enacting the TCPA, Congress intended to give consumers a choice as to how creditors and telemarketers may call them, and made specific findings that “[t]echnologies that might allow consumers to avoid receiving such calls are not universally available, are costly, are unlikely to be enforced, or place an inordinate burden on the consumer. TCPA, Pub.L. No. 102–243, § 11. Toward this end, Congress found that:

[b]anning such automated or prerecorded telephone calls to the home, except when the receiving party consents to receiving the call or when such calls are necessary in an emergency situation affecting the health and safety of the consumer, is the only effective means of protecting telephone consumers from this nuisance and privacy invasion.

Id. at § 12; *see also Martin v. Leading Edge Recovery Solutions, LLC*, 2012

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1 WL 3292838, at* 4 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 10, 2012) (citing Congressional findings
2 on TCPA’s purpose).

- 3 4. Congress also specifically found that “the evidence presented to the Congress
4 indicates that automated or prerecorded calls are a nuisance and an invasion
5 of privacy, regardless of the type of call....” *Id.* at §§ 12-13. *See also, Mims,*
6 132 S. Ct. at 744.

7 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 8 5. This Court has federal question jurisdiction because this case arises out of
9 violation of federal law. *See* 47 U.S.C. §227(b).
- 10 6. Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Southern District of
11 California pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 for the following reasons: (i)
12 Defendant is based and registered within the San Diego County; (ii) at all
13 material times hereto, Plaintiff resided in the County of San Diego, State of
14 California which is within this judicial district; (iii) the conduct complained of
15 herein occurred within this judicial district; and, (iv) many of the acts and
16 transactions giving rise to this action occurred in this district because
17 Defendant.
- 18 7. Upon information and belief, Defendant regularly and continuously conducts
19 business and is incorporated in the State of California, and thus, personal
20 jurisdiction is established.

21 **PARTIES**

- 22 8. Plaintiff, at all times mentioned herein, a resident of the County of San Diego,
23 State of California. Plaintiff is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a
24 “person” as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153 (39).
- 25 9. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon allege, that Defendant is, and
26 at all times mentioned herein was, is a California corporation, and is a
27 “person” as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153 (39).
- 28

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1 10. Plaintiff allege that at all times relevant herein Defendant conducted business
2 in the State of California and in the County of San Diego, and within this
3 judicial district.

4 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

5 11. Sometime in 2016, Plaintiff allegedly incurred a debt to San Diego Imaging
6 Medical Group, which was then sold, transferred, or transferred to Defendant.
7 As it is irrelevant to this action, Plaintiff currently takes no position as to
8 whether or not this alleged debt was actually owed.

9 12. On or about October 13, 2016, the Law Office of Daniel Shay (“Shay”) on
10 behalf and with authorization of Plaintiff, faxed and mailed two (2) cease and
11 desist letters to Defendant. Shay sent one (1) cease and desist letter by
12 facsimile to Defendant’s facsimile number ending “5863” and one (1) cease
13 and desist letter by U.S. First Class Mail to Defendant’s address in Brea,
14 California informing Defendant of the following:

15 [Plaintiff] hereby revokes any prior express consent that may
16 have been given to receive telephone calls, especially to
17 [Plaintiff’s] cellular telephone, from an Automated Telephone
18 Dialing System or an artificial or pre-recorded voice, as
19 outlined in the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47
20 U.S.C. § 227 *et seq.* and [Plaintiff] also revokes any
applicable business relationship.

21 [Plaintiff] has retained [Shay] to stop creditor harassment and
22 to discharge your claim(s) through bankruptcy. Whether you
23 are an original creditor, or a collector, you must cease and
24 desist all communication with [Plaintiff] ...

25 13. Despite Shay’s faxed and mailed cease and desist letters, on October 18,
26 2016, Defendant called Plaintiff’s cellular telephone ending with “2044” via
27 an “automatic telephone dialing system” (“ATDS”), while using an “artificial
28

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1 or prerecorded voice,” as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1), and as prohibited
2 by 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A).

3 14. When Plaintiff answered Defendant’s phone call on October 18, 2016, there
4 was initially silence, then an artificial or prerecorded voice message
5 reminding Plaintiff of the existence of the alleged debt.

6 15. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff never provided Defendant with her
7 cellular telephone number at the time the alleged debt relating to the calls was
8 incurred. Furthermore, if any prior express consent was ever given, it was
9 expressly revoked by the cease and desist correspondence of October 13,
10 2016.

11 16. Defendant made the unwanted autodialed calls using a prerecorded voice to
12 Plaintiff’s cellular phone from the number 619-374-1384.

13 17. Through the unwanted call from Defendant, Plaintiff suffered an invasion of
14 her legally protected interest in privacy, which is specifically addressed and
15 protected by the TCPA.

16 18. Upon information and belief, the telephone equipment used by Defendant to
17 place the call at issue has the capacity to dial telephone numbers
18 automatically from a stored list or database without human intervention, using
19 a random or sequential number generator.

20 19. Defendant’s call constituted a call that was not made for emergency purposes,
21 as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A).

22 20. Defendant’s call was placed to a telephone number assigned to a cellular
23 telephone service for which Plaintiff incurs a charge for incoming calls
24 pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1).

25 21. Defendant did not have prior express consent to place the call to Plaintiff, and
26 if any prior express consent was ever given, it was effectively revoked
27 through Plaintiff’s and Shay’s cease and desist letters to Defendant.
28

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1 22. Plaintiff was personally affected by Defendant’s aforementioned conduct
2 because Plaintiff was frustrated and distressed that Defendant interrupted
3 Plaintiff with an unwanted call using an ATDS and/or prerecorded voice.

4 23. Defendant’s call forced Plaintiff and other similarly situated class members to
5 live without the utility of their cellular phones by occupying their cellular
6 telephone with one or more unwanted calls, causing a nuisance and lost time.

7 24. Plaintiff is informed and believe and here upon allege, that the call was made
8 by Defendant and/or Defendant’s agent(s), with Defendant’s permission,
9 knowledge, control and for Defendant’s benefit.

10 25. Through the aforementioned conduct, Defendant or its agent(s) has violated
11 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1).

12 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

13 26. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and on behalf of all others
14 similarly situated (the “Class”).

15 27. Plaintiff represents, and is a member of the Class, consisting of:

16 All persons within the United States who received any
17 telephone call from Defendant or its agent/s and/or
18 employee/s, not sent for emergency purposes, to said
19 person’s cellular telephone made through the use of any
20 automatic telephone dialing system and/or with an
21 artificial or prerecorded voice within the four years prior
to the filing of this Complaint.

22 28. Defendant and its employees or agents are excluded from the Class. Plaintiff
23 does not know the number of members in the Class, but believes the Class
24 members number in the thousands, if not more. Thus, this matter should be
25 certified as a Class action to assist in the expeditious litigation of this matter.

26 29. Plaintiff and members of the Class were harmed by the acts of Defendant in at
27 least the following ways: Defendant, either directly or through their agents,
28 illegally contacted Plaintiff and the Class members via their cellular

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1 telephones by using an ATDS, thereby causing Plaintiff and the Class
2 members to incur certain cellular telephone charges or reduce cellular
3 telephone time for which Plaintiff and the Class members previously paid,
4 and invading the privacy of said Plaintiff and the Class members. Plaintiff
5 and the Class members were damaged thereby.

6 30. This suit seeks only damages and injunctive relief for recovery of economic
7 injury on behalf of the Class, and it expressly is not intended to request any
8 recovery for personal injury and claims related thereto. Plaintiff reserves the
9 right to expand the Class definition to seek recovery on behalf of additional
10 persons as warranted as facts are learned in further investigation and
11 discovery.

12 31. The joinder of the Class members is impractical and the disposition of their
13 claims in the Class action will provide substantial benefits both to the parties
14 and to the court. The Class can be identified through Defendant's records or
15 Defendant's agents' records.

16 32. There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law and fact
17 involved affecting the parties to be represented. The questions of law and fact
18 to the Class predominate over questions which may affect individual Class
19 members, including the following:

- 20 a) Whether, within the four years prior to the filing of this Complaint,
21 Defendant or their agents initiated any telephonic communications to
22 the Class (other than a message made for emergency purposes or
23 made with the prior express consent of the called party) using any
24 automatic dialing system or prerecorded voice to any telephone
25 number assigned to a cellular phone service;
- 26 b) Whether Defendant can meet its burden of showing Defendant
27 obtained prior express written consent;
- 28 c) Whether Defendant's conduct was knowing and/or willful;

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- d) Whether Plaintiff and the Class members were damaged thereby, and the extent of damages for such violation; and
- e) Whether Defendant and their agents should be enjoined from engaging in such conduct in the future.

33. As persons that received at least one telephonic communication from Defendant's ATDS without Plaintiff's prior express consent, Plaintiff is asserting claims that are typical of the Class. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the Class in that Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to any member of the Class.

34. Plaintiff and the members of the Class have all suffered irreparable harm as a result of Defendant's unlawful and wrongful conduct. Absent a class action, the Class will continue to face the potential for irreparable harm. In addition, these violations of law will be allowed to proceed without remedy and Defendant will likely continue such illegal conduct. Because of the size of the individual Class member's claims, few, if any, Class members could afford to seek legal redress for the wrongs complained of herein.

35. Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in handling class action claims and claims involving violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act.

36. A class action is a superior method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Class-wide damages are essential to induce Defendant to comply with federal and California law. The interest of Class members in individually controlling the prosecution of separate claims against Defendant is small because the maximum statutory damages in an individual action for violation of privacy are minimal. Management of these claims is likely to present significantly fewer difficulties than those presented in many class claims.

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1 37. Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the Class, thereby
2 making appropriate final injunctive relief and corresponding declaratory relief
3 with respect to the Class as a whole.

4 ///

5 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**
6 **NEGLIGENT VIOLATIONS OF THE TCPA**
7 **47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ.**

8 38. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this
9 Complaint as though fully stated herein.

10 39. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendant constitute numerous and
11 multiple negligent violations of the TCPA, including but not limited to each
12 and every one of the above-cited provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*

13 40. As a result of Defendant’s negligent violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*,
14 Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of \$500.00 in statutory
15 damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).

16 41. Plaintiff and the Class are also entitled to and seek injunctive relief
17 prohibiting such conduct in the future.

18 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**
19 **KNOWING AND/OR WILLFUL VIOLATIONS OF THE TCPA**
20 **47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ.**

21 42. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this
22 Complaint as though fully stated herein.

23 43. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendant constitute numerous and
24 multiple knowing and/or willful violations of the TCPA, including but not
25 limited to each and every one of the above-cited provisions of 47 U.S.C. §
26 227, *et seq.*

27 44. As a result of Defendant’s knowing and/or willful violations of 47 U.S.C. §
28 227, *et seq.*, Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of \$1,500.00 in

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1 statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. §
2 227(b)(3)(B) and 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C).

3 45. Plaintiff and the Class are also entitled to and seek injunctive relief
4 prohibiting such conduct in the future.

5 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

6 **WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff and the Class members pray for judgment as
7 follows against Defendant:

- 8 • Certify the Class as requested herein;
- 9 • Appoint Plaintiff to serve as the Class Representative in this matter;
- 10 • Appoint Plaintiff’s Counsel as Class Counsel in this matter;
- 11 • Providing such further relief as may be just and proper.

12 In addition, Plaintiff and the Class members pray for further judgment as follows
13 against Defendant:

14 **NEGLIGENT VIOLATION OF**
15 **THE TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ.**

- 16 • As a result of Defendant’s negligent violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1),
17 Plaintiff seeks for herself and each Class member \$500.00 in statutory
18 damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C.
19 § 227(b)(3)(B).
- 20 • Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(A), injunctive relief prohibiting such
21 conduct in the future.
- 22 • Any other relief the Court may deem just and proper.

23 **KNOWING/WILLFUL VIOLATION OF**
24 **THE TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ.**

- 25 • As a result of Defendant’s knowing and/or willful violations of 47 U.S.C.
26 § 227(b)(1), Plaintiff seeks for herself and each Class member \$1,500.00
27 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C.
28 § 227(b)(3)(B).

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- 1 • Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(A), injunctive relief prohibiting such
- 2 conduct in the future.
- 3 • Any other relief the Court may deem just and proper.

4 **TRIAL BY JURY**

5 46. Pursuant to the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of
6 America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and demand, a trial by jury.

7
8 Dated: 2/10/17

Respectfully submitted,

9 **KAZEROUNI LAW GROUP, APC**

10
11 By: s/ ABBAS KAZEROUNIAN
12 ABBAS KAZEROUNIAN, ESQ.
13 AK@KAZLG.COM
14 ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF

15 Additional Plaintiff's Counsel

16 **HYDE & SWIGART**

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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 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.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS
Taneesha Crooks, individually and on behalf of others similarly situated
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff San Diego
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
Abbas Kazerounian, Esq. (SBN: 249203)
245 Fischer Ave., Unit D1, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
800-400-6808

DEFENDANTS
CMRE Financial Services, Inc.
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.
Attorneys (If Known) '17CV0270 H JLB

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
2 U.S. Government Defendant
3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
Citizen of This State
Citizen of Another State
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country
PTF DEF
1 1
2 2
3 3
Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State
Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State
Foreign Nation
PTF DEF
4 4
5 5
6 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Table with 5 columns: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, TORTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES. Includes various legal categories like Insurance, Motor Vehicle, Personal Injury, etc.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 Original Proceeding
2 Removed from State Court
3 Remanded from Appellate Court
4 Reinstated or Reopened
5 Transferred from Another District
6 Multidistrict Litigation

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
47 U.S.C. § 227 et seq. ("TCPA")
Brief description of cause:
Defendant violated the Telephone Consumer Protection Act

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.
DEMAND \$ 5,000,000.00
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY
(See instructions):
JUDGE
DOCKET NUMBER

DATE 02/10/2017
SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD
s/ Abbas Kazerounian

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading 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. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.
 United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.
 Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
 Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the six boxes.
 Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.
 Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
 Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
 Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.
 Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
 Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.
 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.
 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.
- Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [TCPA Class Action Filed Against CMRE Financial Services](#)
