UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY LOUISVILLE DIVISION

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}	Cause No. 3:17-cv-576-TBR
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}	CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT
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Plaintiff, Ella J. Fausz ("*Plaintiff*" or "*Ms. Fausz*"), individually and on behalf of others similarly situated, by counsel, files this complaint against the Defendant, Equifax Information Services, LLC ("*Defendant*" or "*Equifax*"), and states as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action for actual damages, statutory damages, and punitive damages brought by plaintiffs and the Class Members against Equifax for willful, knowing, and/or negligent violations of Chapter 41, the Consumer Credit Protection Credit Act, of Title 15 (Commerce and Trade) of the United States Code, specifically, 15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq. (known as the "Fair Credit

Reporting Act", hereafter the "FCRA"), which relates to the compilation and dissemination of consumer credit and other financial information. Plaintiffs also assert claims against Equifax under state law for invasion of privacy, negligence, and for violation of Kentucky's Consumer Protection Act. Plaintiffs claim that Equifax violated their rights by disclosing private information about them to third parties and by failing to properly safeguard the named plaintiffs' personal information.

PARTIES

- 2. The Plaintiff, Ella J. Fausz, is an individual and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, presently residing in Jefferson County, Kentucky.
- 3. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as that term is defined in the FCRA and with respect to the matters herein.
- 4. Defendant, Equifax Information Services, LLC, is a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the state of Georgia.
- 5. At all pertinent times herein, Equifax was engaged in the business of acquiring, using, furnishing, and disseminating consumer information in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Equifax has principal offices located in Atlanta, Georgia. Equifax is a "consumer reporting agency," as said term is defined and/or contemplated in the FCRA, with respect to the matters referenced herein.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1681p.

7. Venue in this District is proper because the Equifax transacts business in this District, Plaintiff was a resident of this District at all pertinent times herein, and the conduct complained of occurred here.

FACTS

- 8. From around May 2017 through July 2017, an unknown third party breached Equifax's data servers and accessed sensitive personal information of the named plaintiff and the Class Members, including names, social security numbers, birth dates, addresses, and driver's license numbers, and potentially credit card numbers. The accessed information constitutes a "credit report" as said term is defined and used in the FCRA.
- 9. On or about July 29, 2017, Equifax discovered the breach. Equifax did not immediately notify law enforcement personnel or affected consumers of the breach.
- 10. In early August, 2017, before the breach was made public, Equifax executives sold shares of Equifax worth at least \$1,800,000.
 - 11. On or about September 7, 2017, Equifax admitted the breach in a press release.
- 12. As a proximate cause of Equifax's failure to properly safeguard the named plaintiff's and Class Members' private information, an unknown third party accessed and stole the information.
- 13. As a proximate result of Equifax's acts or omissions, including its delay of six weeks in notifying law enforcement personnel and affected consumers, the named plaintiffs and the Class Members suffered actual harm, including invasion of privacy and emotional distress. Additionally, the named plaintiffs and Class Members have been subjected to an imminent, immediate, and continuing risk of identity theft and identity fraud.

14. As a proximate consequence of Equifax's conduct as herein alleged, the named plaintiffs and the Class Members are entitled to an award against Equifax in the form of actual damages, statutory damages, attorney's fees, and costs.

COUNT I WILLFUL NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE FCRA

- 15. Between approximately May 2017 and the present, Equifax willfully failed to comply with the requirements of the FCRA, by, *inter alia*:
- a. failing to maintain reasonable procedures designed to limit the furnishing of consumer reports to permissible purposes, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1681e(a); and,
- b. furnishing consumer reports under circumstances not authorized under Section 1681b(a) of the FCRA, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1681b(a).
- 16. As a proximate result of Equifax's willful violations of the FCRA, the named plaintiff and the Class Members have suffered harm, and Equifax is liable to the named plaintiff and the Class Members for actual damages, statutory damages, punitive damages, plus attorney's fees and costs.

COUNT II NEGLIGENT NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE FCRA

17. In the alternative, Defendant was negligent in failing to comply with the requirements of the FCRA and are liable to the named plaintiff and the Class Members for actual damages, plus attorney's fees and costs.

COUNT III NEGLIGENCE

18. Equifax owed the named plaintiff and the Class Members a duty to protect and safeguard their private information.

- 19. Equifax failed to discharge its duties, resulting in dissemination of the information to others.
- 20. As a proximate result of Equifax's negligence, the named plaintiff and the Class Members suffered actual harm, and Equifax is liable to the named plaintiff and the Class Members for damages.

COUNT IV VIOLATION OF KRS 367.170

- 24. Equifax violated the provisions of Kentucky's Consumer Protection Act by its use of unfair, false, misleading and/or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of its trade or commerce.
- 25. As herein alleged, Equifax acted toward the named plaintiff and the Class Members with oppression, fraud, and/or malice, warranting the imposition of punitive damages against Equifax.
- 26. Pursuant to KRS 367.220, the named plaintiff and the Class Members are entitled to an award of actual damages against Equifax, plus attorney's fees and costs.
- 27. Pursuant to KRS 411.184(2), the named plaintiff and the Class Members are entitled to an award of punitive damages against Equifax.

COUNT V INVASION OF PRIVACY

- 28. Between May 2017 and the present, Equifax unreasonably intruded upon the privacy and seclusion of named plaintiff and the Class Members, by, *inter alia*, allowing a third person to access the named plaintiff and Class Members' private information.
 - 29. As a proximate result of said intrusion, the named plaintiffs and the Class Members

suffered damages and the loss of privacy.

- 30. At law, the named plaintiff and the Class Members are entitled to an award of compensatory damages against Equifax.
- 31. Pursuant to KRS 411.184(2), the named plaintiff and the Class Members are entitled to an award of punitive damages against Equifax.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- 15. Plaintiff files this action as a class action on behalf of all Kentucky residents whose private information was stolen as a result of breaches of Equifax's data servers between May 1, 2017 and July 29, 2017.
- 16. This action has been brought and may properly be maintained as a class action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23 on behalf of Plaintiff and all others similarly situated with the Class defined as follows: all Kentucky residents whose private information was accessed or stolen from Equifax's data servers as a result of the data breaches between May 1, 2017 and July 29, 2017.
- 17. Members of the Class are so numerous that their individual joinder is impracticable. The precise number of Class Members is unknown to Plaintiff, but upon information and belief, the number of individuals within the Class may exceed 200. The true number of Class Members is likely to be known to Equifax.
- 18. There is a well-defined community of interest among members of the Class. The claims of the representative Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the Class. The named plaintiff and all Class Members suffered loss of privacy and emotional distress as a result of Equifax's failure to

comply with the requirements of the FCRA and state law. The factual basis of Equifax's conduct is common to all Class Members and resulted in injury to all Class Members.

- 19. The questions of law and fact in this case are common to Plaintiff and Class Members and include the following:
- a. Did Equifax have a duty to maintain reasonable procedures to safeguard the Class Members' personal information?
 - b. Did Equifax fail to comply with the requirements of the FCRA?
- c. Was Equifax negligent in failing to safeguard the Class Members' personal information or in failing to immediately notify law enforcement and affected consumers of the breach?
- d. Is Equifax liable to the Class Members for invasion of privacy under Kentucky law?
 - e. Did Equifax violate the provisions of Kentucky's Consumer Protection Act?
 - f. Did Equifax's acts or omissions cause harm to the Class Members?
- 20. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class. Plaintiff has retained counsel with experience in FCRA claims and complex litigation. Plaintiff and counsel are committed to vigorously prosecuting this action on behalf of the Class they represent and have the financial resources to do so. None of the named plaintiffs or counsel has any interest adverse to those of the Class.
- 21. Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and will continue to suffer harm and damage as a result of Equifax's conduct. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy. Absent a class action, the vast majority of

the Class Members would likely find the cost of litigating their claims prohibitive and would have no effective remedy at law. Class treatment of common questions of law and fact is superior to multiple individual actions or piecemeal litigation in that class treatment will conserve the resources of the courts and litigants and promote consistency and efficiency of adjudication.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs, Ella J. Fausz and the putative Class Members, by counsel, request this Court to:

- a. Certify the Plaintiff's Class, appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative, and appoint undersigned counsel as counsel of record as Class counsel;
- b. Enter judgment against Equifax to compensate Plaintiff and the Class Members for their actual damages sustained as set forth in above Counts.
- c. Enter judgment against Equifax under the above Counts for statutory damages for the Plaintiff and for each member of the Class.
- d. Enter judgment against Equifax for punitive damages on the above Counts wherein an award of such damages is proper and appropriate.
 - e. Conduct a trial by jury on all issues so triable.
- f. Enter an order temporarily and permanently enjoining Equifax from future similar violations of the FCRA.
 - g. Enter an order awarding attorneys' fees and costs herein incurred against Equifax.
 - h. Grant any and all other relief to which the Court deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

TAYLOR COUCH PLLC

/s/ Zachary L. Taylor

Zachary L. Taylor Nina B. Couch 2815 Taylorsville Road, Suite 101 Louisville, Kentucky 40205 Phone: (502) 625-5000

Facsimile: (502) 822-2500 ztaylor@taylorcouchlaw.com ncouch@taylorcouchlaw.com

JS 44 (Rev. 12/12)

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 de				774, is required for the use of	the clerk of court for the		
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS				
Ella J. Fausz			Equifax Information	n Services, LLC			
(b) County of Residence of	f First Listed Plaintiff <u>J</u>	efferson, Kentucky	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant				
(EZ	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA	ASES)	NOTE: IN LAND CO	(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES O ONDEMNATION CASES, USE TI	· ·		
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address. and Telephone Numbe	r)	Attorneys (If Known)				
Zachary L. Taylor - Taylo	r Couch PLLC	•					
2815 Taylorsville Road, S Louisville, KY 40205 (502							
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	<u>, </u>	One Rox (Only)	 L. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif		
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT							
CONTRACT ☐ 110 Insurance	PERSONAL INJURY	PERSONAL INJURY	FORFEITURE/PENALTY ☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure	BANKRUPTCY ☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	OTHER STATUTES 375 False Claims Act		
□ 120 Marine	☐ 310 Airplane	☐ 365 Personal Injury -	of Property 21 USC 881	☐ 423 Withdrawal	☐ 400 State Reapportionment		
☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument	☐ 315 Airplane Product Liability	Product Liability 367 Health Care/	☐ 690 Other	28 USC 157	☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking		
☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment	☐ 320 Assault, Libel &	Pharmaceutical		PROPERTY RIGHTS	☐ 450 Commerce		
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☐ 190 Other Contract	Product Liability	☐ 380 Other Personal	Relations	□ 864 SSID Title XVI	☐ 891 Agricultural Acts		
☐ 195 Contract Product Liability ☐ 196 Franchise	☐ 360 Other Personal Injury	Property Damage 385 Property Damage	☐ 740 Railway Labor Act ☐ 751 Family and Medical	□ 865 RSI (405(g))	☐ 893 Environmental Matters ☐ 895 Freedom of Information		
	☐ 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	Product Liability	Leave Act ☐ 790 Other Labor Litigation		Act ☐ 896 Arbitration		
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITIONS	☐ 791 Employee Retirement	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	☐ 899 Administrative Procedure		
☐ 210 Land Condemnation ☐ 220 Foreclosure	☐ 440 Other Civil Rights ☐ 441 Voting	Habeas Corpus: ☐ 463 Alien Detainee	Income Security Act	☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)	Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision		
☐ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment	☐ 442 Employment	☐ 510 Motions to Vacate		☐ 871 IRS—Third Party	☐ 950 Constitutionality of		
240 Torts to Land245 Tort Product Liability	☐ 443 Housing/ Accommodations	Sentence ☐ 530 General		26 USC 7609	State Statutes		
☐ 290 All Other Real Property	☐ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities -	☐ 535 Death Penalty	IMMIGRATION	1			
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of ca	ause:					
VII. REQUESTED IN		ting Act violations	DEMAND \$	CHECK VES only	if demanded in complaint:		
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VIII. RELATED CASI							
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JS 44 Reverse (Rev. 12/12)

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

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.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of Kentucky						
Ella J. Fausz, individually, and on behalf of a class of similarly situated persons)))					
Plaintiff(s) v. Equifax Information Services, LLC	Civil Action No.					
Defendant(s)))					
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION						
To: (Defendant's name and address) Equifax Information Service Co Corporation Service C 421 W. Main Street Frankfort, KY 40601						
A lawsuit has been filed against you.						
are the United States or a United States agency, or an offi						
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					

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No.

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (1))

1110C #0	This summons for (neeived by me on (date)	name of individual and title, if an	ny)				
was rec	cerved by me on (date)		·				
	☐ I personally serve	ed the summons on the ind	ividual at (place)				
			on (date)	; or			
	☐ I left the summon	ns at the individual's reside	ence or usual place of abode with (name)				
	, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there, on (date), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or I served the summons on (name of individual), will designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of (name of organization)						
			on (date)	; or			
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	☐ Other (specify):						
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00			
	I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.						
Date:							
			Server's signature				
		_	Printed name and title				
		_	Server's address				

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: