UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN MILWAUKEE DIVISION

JENNIFER GAJEWSKI, Individually and on) Case No.: 17-cv-1055	
Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated,) CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT	
Plaintiff,)	
v.	ý	
EGS FINANCIAL CARE, INC.,) Jury Trial Demanded))	
Defendant.)	

INTRODUCTION

1. This class action seeks redress for collection practices that violate the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 *et seq.* (the "FDCPA").

JURISDICTION

2. The court has jurisdiction to grant the relief sought by the Plaintiff pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1337. Venue in this District is proper in that Defendant directed its collection efforts into the District.

PARTIES

- 3. Plaintiff Jennifer Gajewski is an individual who resides in the Eastern District of Wisconsin (Milwaukee County). Her former name is Jennifer Krueger.
- 4. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as defined in the FDCPA, 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3), in that Defendant sought to collect from her a debt allegedly incurred for personal, family or household purposes.
- 5. Defendant EGS Financial Care, Inc. ("EGS") is a debt collection agency with its principal place of business located at 5085 W Park Blvd Ste 300, Plano, TX 75093.
- 6. EGS is engaged in the business of a collection agency, using the mails and telephone to collect consumer debts originally owed to others.

7. EGS is engaged in the business of collecting debts owed to others and incurred for

personal, family or household purposes. EGS is a debt collector as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a

and Wis. Stat. § 427.103(3).

FACTS

8. On or about April 23, 2017, EGS mailed a debt collection letter to Plaintiff

regarding an alleged debt owed to "Synchrony Bank" ("Synchrony"). A copy of this letter is

attached to this Complaint as Exhibit A.

9. The alleged debt referenced in Exhibit A was an Amazon.com-branded credit card

account, and the alleged debt was incurred for personal, family or household purposes, including

purchases of household goods on Amazon's website.

10. Upon information and belief, Exhibit A is a form letter, generated by computer,

and with the information specific to Plaintiff inserted by computer.

11. Exhibit A was the first letter EGS sent to Plaintiff regarding this alleged debt.

12. Exhibit A includes the FDCPA debt validation notice. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a).

13. EGS's letter as a whole is confusing and misleading to the unsophisticated

consumer.

14. Exhibit A states:

AMOUNT NOW DUE: \$234.00

TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANCE: \$2032.00

15. Exhibit A also states:

The named creditor has placed the above account with our office for collection. Please enclose your check or money order.

16. Exhibit A also states:

Your account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in your agreement

vith the original creditor or as otherwise provided by state law.

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17. The bottom of Exhibit A is a "payment coupon." It states:

Account # TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANC

XXXXXXXXXXX9201 \$ 2032.00

JENNIFER M KRUEGER

Payment Amount \$234.00

\$

- 18. Exhibit A is confusing to the unsophisticated consumer. It is unclear whether EGS is collecting the entire \$2,032.00 balance or just the \$234.00 that was represented to be the "Amount Now Due."
- 19. EGS compounds the confusion by stating that Synchrony "has placed the above *account* with our office for collection," (emphasis added) and including both amounts on the payment coupon at the bottom of Exhibit A.
- 20. It is not unusual for banks to hire a debt collector to collect only the "past due" amount, i.e. missed payments and fees, of a credit card balance rather than the whole balance. The Seventh Circuit held in *Barnes v. Advanced Call Ctr. Techs., LLC*, 493 F.3d 838, 840 (7th Cir. 2007), that "only the past due amount, the amount owed [to the debt collector], can be the 'amount of the debt' under § 809(a)(1)." Whichever number EGS is truly collecting, it need only state that amount in the letter.
- 21. The different amounts on <u>Exhibit A</u> render <u>Exhibit A</u> confusing to the unsophisticated consumer, who would not be able to determine, or would be confused as to, which amount EGS was actually attempting to collect.
 - 22. The alleged debt or debts here is an unsecured credit card account.
- 23. Upon information and belief, EGS and Synchrony would accept any payment of any amount at any time.

The FDCPA

- 24. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e generally prohibits "any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt."
- 25. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(2)(a) specifically prohibits the "false representation of the character, amount, or legal status" of an alleged debt.
- 26. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) specifically prohibits the "use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt."
- 27. 15 U.S.C. § 1692f generally prohibits "unfair or unconscionable means to collect or attempt to collect any debt."
 - 28. Plaintiff was confused by Exhibit A.
 - 29. The unsophisticated consumer would be confused by Exhibit A.
- 30. Plaintiff had to spend time and money investigating Exhibit A, and the consequences of any potential responses to Exhibit A.
- 31. Plaintiff had to take time to obtain and meet with counsel, including traveling to counsel's office by car and its related expenses, including but not limited to the cost of gasoline and mileage, to advise Plaintiff on the consequences of Exhibit A.
- 32. The FDCPA creates substantive rights for consumers; violations cause injury to consumers, and such injuries are concrete and particularized. *Bock v. Pressler & Pressler, LLP*, No. 11-7593, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 81058 *21 (D.N.J. May 25, 2017) ("through [s]ection 1692e of the FDCPA, Congress established 'an enforceable right to truthful information concerning' debt collection practices, a decision that 'was undoubtedly influenced by congressional awareness that the intentional provision of misinformation' related to such practices, 'contribute[s] to the number of personal bankruptcies, to marital instability, to the loss

of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy,"); *Quinn v. Specialized Loan Servicing, LLC*, No. 16 C 2021, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 107299 *8-13 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 11, 2016) (rejecting challenge to Plaintiff's standing based upon alleged FDCPA statutory violation); *Lane v. Bayview Loan Servicing, LLC*, No. 15 C 10446, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 89258 *9-10 (N.D. Ill. July 11, 2016) ("When a federal statute is violated, and especially when Congress has created a cause of action for its violation, by definition Congress has created a legally protected interest that it deems important enough for a lawsuit."); *Church v. Accretive Health, Inc.*, No. 15-15708, 2016 U.S. App. LEXIS 12414 *7-11 (11th Cir. July 6, 2016) (same); *see also Mogg v. Jacobs*, No. 15-CV-1142-JPG-DGW, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 33229, 2016 WL 1029396, at *5 (S.D. Ill. Mar. 15, 2016) ("Congress does have the power to enact statutes creating legal rights, the invasion of which creates standing, even though no injury would exist without the statute," (quoting *Sterk v. Redbox Automated Retail, LLC*, 770 F.3d 618, 623 (7th Cir. 2014)). For this reason, and to encourage consumers to bring FDCPA actions, Congress authorized an award of statutory damages for violations. 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a).

33. Moreover, Congress has explicitly described the FDCPA as regulating "abusive practices" in debt collection. 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(a) – 1692(e). Any person who receives a debt collection letter containing a violation of the FDCPA is a victim of abusive practices. *See* 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(e) ("It is the purpose of this subchapter to eliminate abusive debt collection practices by debt collectors, to insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged, and to promote consistent State action to protect consumers against debt collection abuses"). For this reason, and to encourage consumers to bring FDCPA actions, Congress authorized an award of statutory damages for violations. 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a).

COUNT I – FDCPA

- 34. Plaintiff incorporates by reference as if fully set forth herein the allegations contained in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 35. EGS represented the amount of the debt that EGS was attempting to collect in a confusing manner by stating multiple amounts that EGS was attempting to collect. Exhibit A.
- 36. The unsophisticated consumer would be confused as to whether EGS was attempting to collect only the "Amount Now Due" or the total balance.
- 37. EGS's conduct violates 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e, 1692e(2)(a), 1692e(10), 1692(f) and 1692g(a)(1).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- 38. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of a Class consisting of (a) all natural persons in the State of Wisconsin, (b) who were sent an initial collection letter in the form represented by Exhibit A to the complaint in this action, (c) seeking to collect a debt, incurred for personal, family or household purposes (d) between July 31, 2016 and July 31, 2017, inclusive, (e) that was not returned by the postal service.
- 39. The Class is so numerous that joinder is impracticable. Upon information and belief, there are more than 50 members of the Class.
- 40. There are questions of law and fact common to the members of the class, which common questions predominate over any questions that affect only individual class members. The predominant common question is whether Exhibit A violates the FDCPA.
- 41. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Class members. All are based on the same factual and legal theories.

- 42. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent the interests of the Class members. Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in consumer credit and debt collection abuse cases.
- 43. A class action is superior to other alternative methods of adjudicating this dispute. Individual cases are not economically feasible.

JURY DEMAND

44. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests that the Court enter judgment in favor of Plaintiff and the Class and against Defendant for:

- (a) actual damages;
- (b) statutory damages;
- (c) attorneys' fees, litigation expenses and costs of suit; and
- (d) such other or further relief as the Court deems proper.

Dated: August 1, 2017

ADEMI & O'REILLY, LLP

By: /s/ John D. Blythin
Shpetim Ademi (SBN 1026973)
John D. Blythin (SBN 1046105)
Mark A. Eldridge (SBN 1089944)
Denise L. Morris (SBN 1097911)
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(414) 482-8001 (fax)
sademi@ademilaw.com
jblythin@ademilaw.com
meldridge@ademilaw.com
dmorris@ademilaw.com

EXHIBIT A

PO BOX 1020 **DEPT 806** HORSHAM, PA 19044

4740 Baxter Road Virginia Beach, VA 23462

> լիներիկներոնիինների հայարդության անակարհանակություններ JENNIFER M KRUEGER 3660 E BARBARA CT APT 3 OAK CREEK, WI 53154

877-278-5297 OFFICE HOURS(ET): 8:00AM-10:00PM Monday thru Friday 8:00AM-5:00PM Saturday 10:30AM-7:30PM Sunday Apr 23, 2017

EGS FINANCIAL CARE, INC.

7896 CREDITOR: Synchrony Bank ACCOUNT #: XXXXXXXXXXXX9201 REGARDING: Amazon.com Store Credit Card Account AMOUNT NOW DUE: \$234.00

TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANCE: \$2032.00 Notice: See Reverse Side For Important Information.

The named creditor has placed the above account with our office for collection. Please enclose your check or money order. If you need to peak to a representative, you may call us at 877-278-5297.

Tou may also make payment by visiting www.syncbank.com/amazon

Juless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of the debt or any portion thereof, this ffice will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days from receiving this notice, this office will obtain erification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request this office, in vriting, within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if lifferent from the current creditor.

Calls to or from this company may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance.

Your account balance may be periodically increased due to the addition of accrued interest or other charges as provided in your agreement vith the original creditor or as otherwise provided by state law.

This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. This is a communication from a debt :ollector.

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT (MAKE SURE ADDRESS SHOWS THROUGH WINDOW)

Account #

TOTAL ACCOUNT BALANC

XXXXXXXXXXXXX9201

\$ 2032.00 AMOUNT NOW DUE:

JENNIFER M KRUEGER

\$234.00

Payment Amount

\$

Check here if your address or phone number has changed and provide the new information below.

Make Payment To:

Synchrony Bank/Amazon.com PO Box 960013 Orlando, FL 32896-0013

Federal and state law prohibit certain methods of debt collection, and require that we treat you fairly. If you have a complaint about the way we are collecting your debt, please visit our website at www.egsfinancialcare.com or contact the FTC online at www.ftc.gov, by phone at 1-877-FTC-HELP; or by mail at 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20580. If you want information about your rights when you are contacted by a debt collector, please contact the FTC online at www.ftc.gov.

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 THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

Place an X in the appropriate B	ox: Green Bay	Division	₽.	Milwaukee Division		
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS JENNIFER GAJEWSKI			DEFENDANTS EGS FINANC	DEFENDANTS EGS FINANCIAL CARE, INC., et al.		
(c) Attorney's (Firm Name, Ademi & O'Reilly, LLP, 30	Address, and Telephone Number) 520 E. Layton Ave., Cudahy, WI 53110 (414) 482-8001-Facsimile	0 III. C Party) Citi	County of Residence o NOTE: IN LAND LAND I Attorneys (If Known) CITIZENSHIP OF PI (For Diversity Cases Only)	f First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES OF CONDEMNATION CASES, USINVOLVED. RINCIPAL PARTIES TF DEF 1	Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF incipal Place	
			izen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 Foreign Nation	6 6 6	
240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability	TORTS PERSONAL INJURY	PERSONAL INJURY 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability RSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage 385 Property Damage Product Liability ISONER PETITIONS 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence Habeas Corpus: 530 General 531 Death Penalty 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition	610 Agriculture 620 Other Food & Drug 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 630 Liquor Laws 640 R.R. & Truck 650 Airline Regs. 660 Occupational Safety/Health 690 Other LABOR 710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations 730 Labor/Mgmt. Reporting & Disclosure Act 740 Railway Labor Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act IMMIGRATION 462 Naturalization Application 463 Habeas Corpus Alien Detainee 465 Other Immigration Actions	422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal	OTHER STATUTES 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 810 Selective Service 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 892 Economic Stabilization Act 893 Environmental Matters 894 Energy Allocation Act 895 Freedom of Information Act 900Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	
☑ 1 Original ☐ 2 Re	Cite the U.S. Civil Statute 15 U.S.C. 1692 et seq	ellate Court Recunder which you are filing	opened another (specific	al statutes unless diversity):	Judgment if demanded in complaint:	
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(See instructions): JUD	-	VARDESCE	DOCKET NUMBER		
August 1, 2017 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		signature of attorney s/ John D. Blyth				

– ^{AMOUNT} Case 2:17-cv-01055-LA Filed 08/01/17 Page 1 of 2 Document 1-2

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.C.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; 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 clerks 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 seven 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.

Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment. (7) Check this box for an appeal from a magistrate judge's decision.

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 dollar amount (in thousands of dollars) 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 Eastern District of Wisconsin

JENNIFER G	AJEWSKI)))
Plaintif	f(s)	. /
v.		Civil Action No. 17-cv-1055
))
EGS FINANCIAI	CARE, INC.)
Defendar	nt(s))
	SUMMONS	IN A CIVIL ACTION
To: (Defendant's name and address)	EGS FINANCIAL CARE, c/o C T CORPORATION 8020 Excelsior Dr., Ste. 20 Madison, WI 53717	INC. SYSTEM
A lawsuit has been file	ed against you.	
the United States or a United 12(a)(2) or (3) – you must se	States agency, or an officerve on the plaintiff an an	n you (not counting the day you receive it) – or 60 days if you are cer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. swer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the n must be served on the plaintiff or the plaintiff's attorney, whose
If you fail to respond You also must file your answe		be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.
		STEPHEN C. DRIES, CLERK OF COURT
Date:		Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. 17-cv-1055

PROOF OF SERVICE

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

ere received	l by me on (date)	·				
\Box I ₁	personally served	the summons and the attached comple	aint on the individual at (place):			
			On (date)	; or		
□ I1	left the summons	and the attached complaint at the indi				
on (da	on (date), a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there, on (date), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or					
	served the summo	ns and the attached complaint on (nan	ne of individual)			
who i	is designated by la	w to accept service of process on beh	nalf of (name of organization)			
		0	n (date)	; or		
□ I 1	returned the summ	nons unexecuted because		; or		
□ О	other (specify):					
My fe	ees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00		
I decl	are under penalty	of perjury that this information is true	e.			
ate:						
			Server's signature			
			Printed name and title			
			Server's address			

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc.:

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: FDCPA Complaint Filed Against EGS Financial Care