#### **BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC**

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Attorneys for Plaintiff Our File No.: 114817

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Ivette Hines, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

VS.

ARS National Services, Inc.,

Defendant.

Docket No:

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT** 

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Ivette Hines, 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 ARS National Services, 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.

#### **PARTIES**

- 5. Plaintiff Ivette Hines is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Kings County, New York.
  - 6. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).
- 7. On information and belief, Defendant ARS National Services, Inc., is a California Corporation with a principal place of business in San diego County, California.
- 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 February 6, 2018. ("Exhibit 1.")
  - 15. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).
- 16. The Debt was incurred on a credit card underwritten by Citibank, N.A. ("Citibank.")
- 17. The Letter includes the statement "While your account is with our office, if you pay \$2,382.93, the above-referenced account will be considered paid in full."
- 18. The Letter fails to indicate whether the amount stated will increase if the account is not with Defendant.
- 19. The Letter fails to indicate whether the amount stated will increase due to interest if the account is not with Defendant.
- 20. The Letter fails to indicate whether the amount stated will increase due to fees if the account is not with Defendant.

- 21. The Letter intimates that the balance will change if Defendant does not have the account.
- 22. The Letter intimates that the balance will increase if Defendant does not have the account.
- 23. The Letter creates the false impression that the least sophisticated consumer must pay the amount stated to Defendant or the balance will increase.
  - 24. The Letter creates a false sense of urgency.
- 25. The Letter creates a false sense of urgency that may cause the least sophisticated consumer to choose to pay Defendant.
- 26. The Letter creates a false sense of urgency that may cause the least sophisticated consumer to choose to pay Defendant rather than another debt.
- 27. A collection letter violates 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.
- 28. The Letter could be read by the least sophisticated consumer to mean that the balance will change if Defendant does not have the account.
- 29. The Letter could be read by the least sophisticated consumer to mean that the balance will increase if Defendant does not have the account.
- 30. The Letter could be read by the least sophisticated consumer to create the false impression that the consumer must pay the amount stated to Defendant or the balance will increase.
- 31. The Letter could be read by the least sophisticated consumer to create a false sense of urgency.
- 32. The Letter could be read by the least sophisticated consumer to create a false sense of urgency that may cause the least sophisticated consumer to choose to pay Defendant.
- 33. Because the least sophisticated consumer would not know whether, if the payment was not made, interest and fees would be added to the debt, the letter is deceptive.
- 34. 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 under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
  - 35. For these reasons, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

#### **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

- 36. 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 using a collection letter that includes the statement, "While your account is with our office, if you pay \$\_\_\_\_\_\_, the above-referenced account will be considered paid in full," from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.
- 37. 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.
  - 38. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.
- 39. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts using a collection letter that includes the statement, "While your account is with our office, if you pay \$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the above-referenced account will be considered paid in full."
- 40. 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.
- 41. 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.
- 42. 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**

43. 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
- 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: March 5, 2018

#### **BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC**

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

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Attorneys for Plaintiff
Our File No.: 114817

Department #1271.998-cv-01673 Document 1-1 Filed 03/186/18 io Rate of Rac Page ID #: 6 P.O. Box 3005 PO Box 469100 Phoenixville, PA 19460

February 06, 2018

«Ուլսիհայիկայիկակարարդիարևերկինուիիայացույսիկինիկա **IVETTE D HINES** 682 RALPH AVE APT 4B **BROOKLYN NY 11212-3853** 

Escondido, CA 92046-9100 (800) 976-0960 FAX; (866) 422-0765 Live Chat and Online Payments: www.PavARS.com

#### **ACCOUNT IDENTIFICATION**

Creditor: Citibank, N.A.

Account No.: \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*9921 ARS Reference No.:

Balance: \$2,382.93

In reference to your SEARS CARD Account.

#### Settle For Less Than The Full Balance!

Dear Sir/Madam:

Citibank has hired ARS to work with you to resolve the above-referenced account. While your account is with our office, if you pay \$2,382.93, the above-referenced account will be considered paid in full.

Right now we are offering to settle your account for the reduced amount of \$1,310.62. That's a savings of \$1,072.31. If you cannot make the settlement payment by 2/23/2018, please contact us to discuss all your payment options. We reserve the right to treat any missed or late payment as a cancellation of this settlement agreement. All payments we receive from you will be applied to reduce your balance. Even if this settlement is cancelled due to a missed payment there may be opportunities to settle at a later date. We are not obligated to renew this offer. To review a range of payment options 24 hours a day, please visit our website at www.PayARS.com using your ARS Reference 2725). ARS also offers "Quick Check" by phone, Western Union "Quick Collect" (Code City: ARS Moneygram "Express Payment" (Receive Code: 2471).

To make a payment or review other options on this account 24 hours a day, please visit our website at www.PayARS.com. Some payment options include: "Quick Check" by phone, Western Union "Quick Collect" (Code City: ARS 2725), and Moneygram "Express Payment" (Receive Code: 2471). Payments, made payable to Citibank, can be mailed to the ARS Escondido, CA address above.

Please call your account representative at (800) 976-0960 for any questions, Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER MILLER X4640 Account Representative

### THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Account: 2725/**********9921 (SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT IN	NFORMATION) address/phone changes below or call (800) 976-0960.
Amount Enclosed: \$	IIICIII
Enclosing this coupon with your payment will expedite credit to your account.	
Please send your payment(s) to ARS payable to:	
CITIBANK	Home ()
PO BOX 469100	-
ESCONDIDO, CA 92046-9100	Work ()



We are required and a complete list of the rights for consumers under Federal, State, or Local laws.

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs License numbers 2000745, 2000744, and 2000742.

Debt collectors, in accordance with the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 USC §1692 et seq., are prohibited from engaging in abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection efforts, including but not limited to:

- i) The use or threat of violence;
- ii) The use of obscene or profane language; and
- iii) Repeated phone calls made with the intent to annoy, abuse, or harass.

"If a creditor or debt collector receives a money judgment against you in court, state and federal laws may prevent the following types of income from being taken to pay the debt:

- 1. Supplemental security income, (SSI);
- 2. Social security;
- 3. Public assistance (welfare);
- 4. Spousal support, maintenance (alimony) or child support;
- 5. Unemployment benefits;
- 6. Disability benefits;
- 7. Workers' compensation benefits;
- 8. Public or private pensions;
- 9. Veterans' benefits;
- 10. Federal student loans, federal student grants, and federal work study funds; and
- 11. Ninety percent of your wages or salary earned in the last sixty days."

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

for the

EASTERN DISTRICT	Γ OF <u>NEW YORK</u>		
Ivette Hines, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated  Plaintiff(s)  V.  ARS National Services, Inc.  Defendant(s)	) ) ) Civil Action No. ) ) )		
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION			
60 days if you are the United States, or a United States	on you (not counting the day you received it) – or sagency, or an officer or employee of the United		
States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) – you attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the F motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attached.	ederal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or		
BARSHAY SAN 100 GARDEN CITY P GARDEN CITY	LAZA, SUITE 500		
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will the complaint. You also must file your answer or moti-	be entered against you for the relief demanded in on with the court.		
	CLERK OF COURT		

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

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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 decket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

ourpose of initiating the civil do	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE	E OF THI	S FORM.)	1774, 15 requi	ied for the use of the	ne clerk of court for the	
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS				
IVETTE HINES  (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff KINGS  (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				ARS NATION	NAL SERVIO	L SERVICES, INC.		
				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant SAN DIEGO  (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 BARSHAY SAND 100 Garden City Pl (516) 203-7600	•			Attorneys (If Known	ı)			
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in (	One Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF 1	PRINCIPA	L PARTIES	Place an "X" in One Box for Pla	
O 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	J.S. Government • 3 Federal Question		(For L	hiversity Cases Only)  PTF DEF PIF  n of This State O 1 O 1 Incorporated or Principal Place O 4  of Business In This State				
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			en of Another State	02 02	Incorporated and P of Business In A		
N/ NATURE OF CHIE			Citizen or Subject of a O 3 O 3 Foreign Nation O Foreign Country				O 6 C	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT CONTRACT		ly) DRTS	FC	PRFEITURE/PENALTY	BAN	KRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES	
O 110 Insurance O 120 Marine O 130 Miller Act O 140 Negotiable Instrument O 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment O 151 Medicare Act O 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) O 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits O 160 Stockholders' Suits O 190 Other Contract	PERSONAL INJURY O 310 Airplane O 315 Airplane Product Liability	PERSONAL INJUI O 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability O 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability O 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability O 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER O 370 Other Fraud O 371 Truth in Lending O 380 Other Personal Property Damage O 385 Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITION Habeas Corpus: O 463 Alien Detainee O 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence O 530 General O 535 Death Penalty Other: O 540 Mandamus & Other O 550 Civil Rights O 555 Prison Condition O 560 Civil Detainee Conditions of Confinement	RY 0 625 0 690 0 710 0 720 0 740 0 751 0 790 0 791	0 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881   0 422 Appeal   0 423 Withdra 28 USC   1 690 Other   0 820 Copyrig   0 830 Patent   0 840 Tradem   0 840 Tradem   0 840 Tradem   0 862 Black L   0 720 Labor/Management Relations   0 864 SSID T   0 864 SSID T   0 865 RSI (40 1790 Other Labor Litigation   0 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act   0 871 IRS—T		al 28 USC 158 Irawal C 157  RTY RIGHTS rights t tmark LSECURITY 1395ff) Lung (923) C/DIWW (405(g)) Title XVI 405(g))  AL TAX SUITS (U.S. Plaintiff efendant)	OTHER STATUTES  O 375 False Claims Act O 400 State Reapportionment O 410 Antitrust O 430 Banks and Banking O 450 Commerce O 460 Deportation O 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations  480 Consumer Credit O 490 Cable/Sat TV O 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange O 890 Other Statutory Actions O 891 Agricultural Acts O 893 Environmental Matters O 895 Freedom of Information Act O 896 Arbitration O 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision O 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	
V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in  ● 1 Original O 2 Remo Proceeding Cou	oved from State O 3 Rem urt Cou	ırt	O 4 Reinsta Reop	ened Another (specify	r District	O 6 Multidistrict Litigation – Transfer	O 8 Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File	
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO		atute under which you ar		Oo not cite jurisdictional s  Collection Practices A		iversity): 15 USC {	§1692	
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:  • CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.		DI	EMAND \$	JU	CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:  JURY DEMAND: • Yes ○ No			
VIII. RELATED CASE(S)  IF ANY  (See Instructions)  JUDGE					DOCI	KET NUMBER_		
DATE  March 16, 2018		SIGNATURE OF ATT /s Cr		of record Sanders				
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY								
RECEIPT # AM	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE	JUDGE MAG. JUDGE			

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## 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.

I, Cra	aig B. Sanders , counsel for <u>Plaintiff</u> , do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action
is ineli	gible 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,
	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)
provides because the same the civil to the po	ist 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) is 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 the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to be 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 case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject ower of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still before the court."
	NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)
1.	Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County: 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? 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
	c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specific the County in which the offending communication was received:KINGS
Suffolk	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 County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau olk County?   Yes  No
	(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).
	BAR ADMISSION
I am cu	rrently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.  Yes  No
Are you	a 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: /s Craig B. Sanders

# **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>ARS Facing Class Action Over Collection Letter's Alleged Failure to Clearly State 'Amount of Debt'</u>