

YES / NO  
EXHIBITS

CASE NO. 2020 CH 1089

DATE: 1/28/20

CASE TYPE: CLASS ACTION

PAGE COUNT: 15

CASE NOTE

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FILED
1/28/2020 2:46 PM
DOROTHY BROWN
CIRCUIT CLERK
COOK COUNTY, IL
2020CH01089

8254372

Jennifer Kessler

Plaintiff

v.

Compass Group USA, Inc.

Defendant

No. 2020CH01089

CHANCERY DIVISION CIVIL COVER SHEET
GENERAL CHANCERY SECTION

A Chancery Division Civil Cover Sheet - General Chancery Section shall be filed with the initial complaint in all actions filed in the General Chancery Section of Chancery Division. The information contained herein is for administrative purposes only. Please check the box in front of the appropriate category which best characterizes your action being filed.

- 0005 [ ] Administrative Review
0001 [x] Class Action
0002 [ ] Declaratory Judgment
0004 [ ] Injunction

- 0007 [ ] General Chancery
0010 [ ] Accounting
0011 [ ] Arbitration
0012 [ ] Certiorari
0013 [ ] Dissolution of Corporation
0014 [ ] Dissolution of Partnership
0015 [ ] Equitable Lien
0016 [ ] Interpleader
0017 [ ] Mandamus
0018 [ ] Ne Exeat

- 0019 [ ] Partition
0020 [ ] Quiet Title
0021 [ ] Quo Warranto
0022 [ ] Redemption Rights
0023 [ ] Reformation of a Contract
0024 [ ] Rescission of a Contract
0025 [ ] Specific Performance
0026 [ ] Trust Construction
[ ] Other (specify)

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Pro Se Only: [ ] I have read and agree to the terms of the Clerk's Office Electronic Notice Policy and choose to opt in to electronic notice from the Clerk's Office for this case at this Email address:

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5. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/2-101 as, upon information, Defendant does business in this County.

#### **ILLINOIS'S STRONG STANCE ON PROTECTION OF BIOMETRIC INFORMATION**

6. BIPA provides valuable privacy rights, protections, and benefits to Illinois citizens.

7. Major national corporations started using Chicago and other locations in Illinois in the early 2000s to test “new applications of biometric-facilitated financial transactions, including finger-scan technologies at grocery stores, gas stations, and school cafeterias” 740 ILCS 14/5(c). Given its relative infancy, an overwhelming portion of the public became weary of this then- growing yet unregulated technology. See 740 ILCS 14/5.

8. In late 2007, a biometrics company called Pay by Touch, which provided major retailers throughout the State of Illinois with fingerprint scanners to facilitate consumer transactions, filed for bankruptcy. The bankruptcy was alarming to the Illinois legislature because there was suddenly a serious risk that millions of fingerprint records – which, similar to other unique biometric identifiers, can be linked to people’s sensitive financial and personal data – could now be sold, distributed, or otherwise shared through the bankruptcy proceedings without adequate protections for Illinois citizens. The bankruptcy also highlighted the fact that most consumers who used the company’s fingerprint scanners were completely unaware the scanners were not transmitting fingerprint data to the retailer who deployed the scanner, but rather to the now- bankrupt company, and that their unique biometric identifiers could now be sold to unknown third parties.

9. Recognizing the “very serious need [for] protections for the citizens of Illinois when it [came to their] biometric information,” Illinois enacted BIPA in 2008. See Illinois House Transcript, 2008 Reg. Sess. No. 276; 740 ILCS 14/5.

10. Additionally, to ensure compliance, BIPA provides that, for each violation, the prevailing party may recover \$1,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater, for negligent violations

and \$5,000, or actual damages, whichever is greater, for intentional or reckless violations. 740 ILCS 14/20.

11. BIPA is an informed consent statute which achieves its goal by making it unlawful for a company to, among other things, “collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person’s or a customer’s biometric identifiers or biometric information, unless it first:

- a. Informs the subject in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored;
- b. Informs the subject in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; and
- c. Receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information.”

See 740 ILCS 14/15(b).

12. Biometric identifiers include fingerprints, retina and iris scans, voiceprints, and scans of hand and face geometry. See 740 ILCS 14/10. Biometric information is separately defined to include any information based on an individual’s biometric identifier that is used to identify an individual. *Id.*

13. BIPA also establishes standards for how companies must handle Illinois citizens’ biometric identifiers and biometric information. See, e.g., 740 ILCS 14/15(c)-(d). For example, BIPA prohibits private entities from disclosing a person’s or customer’s biometric identifier or biometric information without first obtaining consent for that disclosure. *See*, 740 ILCS 14/15(d)(1).

14. BIPA also prohibits selling, leasing, trading, or otherwise profiting from a person’s biometric identifiers or biometric information (740 ILCS 14/15(c)) and requires companies to develop and comply with a written policy – made available to the public – establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information when the

initial purpose for collecting such identifiers or information has been satisfied or within three years of the individual's last interaction with the company, whichever occurs first. 740 ILCS 14/15(a).

15. The Illinois legislature enacted BIPA due to the increasing use of biometric data in financial and security settings, the general public's hesitation to use biometric information, and – most significantly – the unknown ramifications of biometric technology. Biometrics are biologically unique to the individual and, once compromised, an individual is at heightened risk for identity theft and left without any recourse.

16. BIPA provides individuals with a private right of action, protecting their right to privacy regarding their biometrics as well as protecting their rights to know the precise nature for which their biometrics are used and how they are being stored and ultimately destroyed. Unlike other statutes that only create a right of action if there is a qualifying data breach, BIPA strictly regulates the manner in which entities may collect, store, use, and disseminate biometrics and creates a private right of action for lack of statutory compliance.

17. Plaintiff, like the Illinois legislature, recognizes how imperative it is to keep biometric information secure. Biometric information, unlike other personal identifiers such as a social security number, cannot be changed or replaced if hacked or stolen.

#### **PLAINTIFF SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS**

18. Plaintiff used a vending machine, which collected Plaintiff's biometric information and biometric identifiers, using a biometric device that operated, at least in part, by scanning Plaintiff's fingerprint (thumbprint).

19. Defendant subsequently stored Plaintiff's biometric data in its database(s).

20. Plaintiff has never been informed of the specific limited purposes or length of time for which Defendant collected, stored, or used her biometrics.

21. Plaintiff has never been informed of any biometric data retention policy developed by Defendant, nor has she ever been informed of whether Defendant will ever permanently delete her biometrics.

22. Plaintiff has never been provided with nor ever signed a written release allowing Defendant to collect, capture, store, or otherwise obtain her fingerprint(s), handprint, hand geometry, or other biometrics.

23. Plaintiff has continuously and repeatedly been exposed to the risks and harmful conditions created by Defendant's violations of BIPA alleged herein.

24. BIPA protects citizens like Plaintiff and the putative Class from this precise conduct, and Defendant had no right to secure this data.

25. Through BIPA, the Illinois legislature has created a right – a right to receive certain information prior to a private entity securing their highly personal, private and proprietary biometric data – and an injury – not receiving this extremely critical information.

26. Pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/15(b), Plaintiff and the putative Class were entitled to receive certain information prior to Defendant securing their biometric data; namely, information advising them of the specific limited purpose(s) and length of time for which it/they collect(s), store(s), and use(s) their fingerprint(s) and any biometrics derived therefrom; information regarding Defendant's biometric retention policy; and, a written release allowing Defendant to collect and store their private biometric data.

27. No amount of time or money can compensate Plaintiff if her biometric data is compromised by the lax procedures through which Defendant captured, stored, used, and disseminated Plaintiff's and other similarly-situated individuals' biometrics, and Plaintiff would not have provided her biometric data to any Defendant if she had known that they would retain such information for an indefinite period of time without her consent.

28. A showing of actual damages beyond a violation of the BIPA statute is not necessary in order to state a claim under BIPA. *See Rosenbach v. Six Flags Ent. Corp.*, 2019 IL 123186, ¶ 40 (“[A]n individual need not allege some actual injury or adverse effect, beyond violation of his or her rights under the Act, in order to qualify as “aggrieved” person and be entitled to seek liquidated damages and injunctive relief pursuant to the Act”).

29. As Plaintiff is not required to allege or prove actual damages beyond a violation of Plaintiff’s statutory rights in order to state a claim under BIPA, she seeks statutory damages under BIPA as compensation for the injuries caused by Defendant. *Rosenbach*, 2019 IL 123186, ¶ 40.

#### **DEFENDANT’S BIOMETRIC FINGER-SCANNING OF CITIZENS**

30. By the time BIPA passed through the Illinois legislature in mid-2008, most companies who had experimented using employees’ biometric data as an authentication method stopped doing so.

31. However, Defendant failed to take note of the shift in Illinois law governing the collection and use of biometric data. As a result, Defendant continues to collect, store, and use citizens’ biometric data in violation of BIPA.

32. At relevant times, Defendant has taken the rather invasive and coercive step of requiring citizens to be fingerprint scanned, and then using biometric information captured from those fingerprint scans, and data derived therefrom, to identify the citizen at Defendant’s vending machines.

33. After a citizens finger scans are captured, collected, and/or recorded by Defendant, citizens are subsequently allowed to scan their finger into one of Defendant’s biometric vending machines.

34. Defendant captured, collected, stored, and/or otherwise obtained the citizen’s biometrics in order to identify and verify the authenticity of the citizen who is making purchases.

35. Defendant has not, on information and belief, properly informed Illinois citizens in



writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being captured, obtained, collected or stored; informed Illinois citizens in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; or obtained Illinois citizens' proper written consent to the capture, collection, obtainment or storage of their biometric identifier and biometric information derived from it.

36. Defendant's biometric vending machines captured, collected, stored, and/or otherwise obtained Plaintiff's biometrics.

37. Defendant did not at any time, on information and belief: inform Plaintiff in writing (or otherwise) that a biometric identifier and biometric information was being obtained, captured, collected, and/or stored, or of the specific purposes and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information was being collected, captured, stored, and/or used; obtain, or attempt to obtain – Plaintiff did not provide consent required by BIPA to the capture, collection, storage, obtainment, and/or use of Plaintiff's fingerprint, finger scan, finger geometry, or associated biometrics. Nor did Plaintiff know or fully understand that Defendant was collecting, capturing, and/or storing biometrics when Plaintiff was scanning Plaintiff's finger; nor did Plaintiff know or could Plaintiff know all of the uses or purposes for which Plaintiff's biometrics were taken.

38. Upon information and belief, Defendant has not publicly disclosed its retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometrics, if such a retention schedule exists.

39. Defendant, on information and belief, has no written policy, made available to the public, that discloses its retention schedule and/or guidelines for retaining and then permanently destroying biometric identifiers and information.

40. The Pay by Touch bankruptcy that catalyzed the passage of BIPA highlights why conduct such as Defendant's – where individuals are aware that they are providing a biometric but not aware of to whom or for what purposes they are doing so – is dangerous.

41. That bankruptcy spurred Illinois citizens and legislators into realizing that it is crucial for individuals to understand when providing biometric identifiers or information such as a finger scan, and/or data derived therefrom, who exactly is collecting their biometric data, where it will be transmitted and for what purposes, and for how long.

42. Thus, BIPA is the Illinois Legislatures expression that Illinois citizens have biometric privacy rights, as created by BIPA.

43. Defendant disregarded these obligations and instead unlawfully collected, stored, and used Illinois citizens' biometric identifiers and information, without ever receiving the individual's informed written consent as required by BIPA.

44. Because Defendant neither published a BIPA-mandated data retention policy nor disclosed the purposes for their collection of biometric data, Illinois citizens have no idea whether Defendant sells, discloses, re-discloses, or otherwise disseminates his or her biometric data.

45. By and through the actions detailed above, Defendant has not only disregard the Class' privacy rights, but it has also violated BIPA.

#### **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

46. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/2-801 on behalf of a class (hereinafter the "Class") defined as follows:

All persons who scanned a fingerprint or thumbprint at a biometric vending machine owned or operated by Defendant in Illinois during the applicable statutory period.

Excluded from the class are Defendant's officers and directors, Plaintiff's counsel, and any member of the judiciary presiding over this action.

47. **Numerosity:** The exact number of class members is unknown and is not available to Plaintiff at this time, but upon information and belief, there are in excess of forty potential class members, and individual joinder in this case is impracticable. Class members can easily be identified through Defendant's records.

48. **Common Questions:** There are several questions of law and fact common to the claims of Plaintiff and the Class members, and those questions predominate over any questions that may affect individual Class members. Common questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. whether Defendant has a practice of capturing or collecting biometrics;
- b. whether Defendant developed a written policy, made available to the public, establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and information when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such identifiers or information has been satisfied or within three years of the individual's last interaction with Defendant, whichever occurs first;
- c. whether Defendant obtained an executed written release from finger scanned citizens before capturing, collecting, or otherwise obtaining biometrics;
- d. whether Defendant obtained an executed written release from finger scanned citizens before capturing, collecting, converting, sharing, storing or using his or her biometrics;
- e. whether Defendant provided a writing disclosing to Illinois citizens the specific purposes for which the biometrics are being collected, stored, and used;
- f. whether Defendant provided a writing disclosing to finger scanned citizens the length of time for which the biometrics are being collected, stored, and used;
- g. whether Defendant's conduct violates BIPA;
- h. whether Defendant's conduct was negligent, reckless, or willful;
- i. whether Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to damages, and what is the proper measure of damages;

49. **Adequacy of Representation:** Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interest of the class and has retained competent counsel experienced in complex litigation and class action litigation. Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to those of the class, and Defendant has no defenses unique to Plaintiff.

50. **Appropriateness:** Class proceedings are also superior to all other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because joinder of all parties is impracticable. Even if Class members were able or willing to pursue such individual litigation, a class action would still be preferable due to the fact that a multiplicity of individual actions would likely increase the

expense and time of litigation given the complex legal and factual controversies presented in this Class Action Complaint. A class action, on the other hand, provides the benefits of fewer management difficulties, single adjudication, economy of scale, and comprehensive supervision before a single Court, and would result in reduced time, effort and expense for all parties and the Court, and ultimately, the uniformity of decisions.

**COUNT I – FOR DAMAGES AGAINST DEFENDANT  
VIOLATION OF 740 ILCS 14/15(a) – FAILURE TO INSTITUTE, MAINTAIN, AND ADHERE TO  
PUBLICLY AVAILABLE RETENTION SCHEDULE**

51. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

52. BIPA mandates that companies in possession of biometric data establish and maintain a satisfactory biometric data retention – and, importantly, deletion – policy. Specifically, those companies must: (i) make publicly available a written policy establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanent deletion of biometric data (at most three years after the company’s last interaction with the individual); and (ii) actually adhere to that retention schedule and actually delete the biometric information. See 740 ILCS 14/15(a).

53. Defendant fails to comply with these BIPA mandates.

54. Defendant is an Delaware corporation registered to do business in Illinois and thus qualifies as a “private entity” under BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

55. Plaintiff is an individual who had her “biometric identifiers” collected by each Defendant, as explained in detail in above. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

56. Plaintiff’s biometric identifiers were used to identify Plaintiff and, therefore, constitute “biometric information” as defined by BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

57. Defendant failed to provide a publicly available retention schedule or guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information as specified by BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/15(a).

58. Upon information and belief, Defendant lacks retention schedules and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric data and have not and will not destroy Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric data when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such data has been satisfied or within three years of the individual's last interaction with the company.

59. On behalf of herself and the Class, Plaintiff seeks: (1) declaratory relief; (2) injunctive and equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class by requiring each Defendant to comply with BIPA's requirements for the collection, storage, and use of biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein; (3) statutory damages of \$5,000 for each intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for each negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(1); and (4) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(3).

**COUNT II – FOR DAMAGES AGAINST DEFENDANT  
VIOLATION OF 740 ILCS 14/15(b) – FAILURE TO OBTAIN INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT AND  
RELEASE BEFORE OBTAINING BIOMETRIC IDENTIFIERS OR INFORMATION**

60. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

61. BIPA requires companies to obtain informed written consent from Illinois citizens before acquiring their biometric data. Specifically, BIPA makes it unlawful for any private entity to “collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person’s or a customer’s biometric identifiers or biometric information unless [the entity] first: (1) informs the subject...in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored; (2) informs the subject ... in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; **and** (3) receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information...” 740 ILCS 14/15(b) (emphasis added).

62. Defendant fails to comply with these BIPA mandates.

63. Defendant is an Illinois corporation registered to do business in Illinois and thus qualifies as a “private entity” under BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

64. Plaintiff and the Class are individuals who have had their “biometric identifiers” collected by Defendants, as explained in detail above. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

65. Plaintiff’s and the Class’s biometric identifiers were used to identify them and, therefore, constitute “biometric information” as defined by BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/10.

66. Defendant systematically and automatically collected, used, stored and disseminated Plaintiff’s and the Class’s biometric identifiers and/or biometric information without first obtaining the written release required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(3).

67. Defendant never informed Plaintiff and the Class in writing that their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information were being collected, stored, used and disseminated, nor did Defendant inform Plaintiff and the Class in writing of the specific purpose(s) and length of term for which their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information were being collected, stored, used and disseminated as required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(1)-(2).

68. By collecting, storing, using and disseminating Plaintiff’s and the Class’s biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein, Defendant violated Plaintiff’s and the Class’s rights to privacy in their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information as set forth in BIPA. See 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.*

69. On behalf of herself and the Class, Plaintiff seeks: (1) declaratory relief; (2) injunctive and equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class by requiring Defendant to comply with BIPA’s requirements for the collection, storage, use and dissemination of biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein; (3) statutory damages of \$5,000 for each intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for each negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS

14/20(1); and (4) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(3).

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the Class of similarly situated individuals, prays for an Order as follows:

- A. Finding this action satisfies the prerequisites for maintenance as a class action set forth in 735 ILCS 5/2-801, *et seq.*, and certifying the Class as defined herein;
- B. Designating and appointing Plaintiff as representative of the Class and Plaintiff's undersigned counsel as Class Counsel;
- C. Declaring that Defendant's actions, as set forth above, violate BIPA;
- D. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class members statutory damages of \$5,000 for *each* intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(2); statutory damages of \$1,000 per *each* negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(1);
- E. Declaring that Defendant's actions, as set forth above, were intentional or reckless;
- F. Declaring that Defendant's actions, as set forth above, were negligent;
- G. Awarding injunctive and other equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class, including an Order requiring Defendants to collect, store, use and disseminate biometric identifiers and/or biometric information in compliance with BIPA;
- H. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class members reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in this litigation pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(3);
- I. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class pre- and post-judgment interest, to the extent allowable; and
- J. Granting all such other and further relief as the Court deems just and appropriate.

Dated: January 28, 2020

Respectfully Submitted:

By: /s/ Brandon M. Wise  
Brandon M. Wise – IL Bar # 6319580  
Paul A. Lesko – IL Bar # 6288806

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COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF AND THE PUTATIVE CLASS



# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Class Action Claims Compass Group USA Illegally Collected Illinois Customers' Fingerprints from Vending Machines](#)

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