TAMPA DIVISION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA 10 2011:

LC TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL.

INC., a Florida corporation, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

ν.

HARVARD RISK MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, a Delaware corporation, and PRE-PAID LEGAL SERVICES, INC. D/B/A LEGALSHIELD an Oklahoma corporation,

Defendants.

Case No.

8:18-cv-01759-T-33-TGW

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

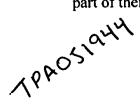
DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

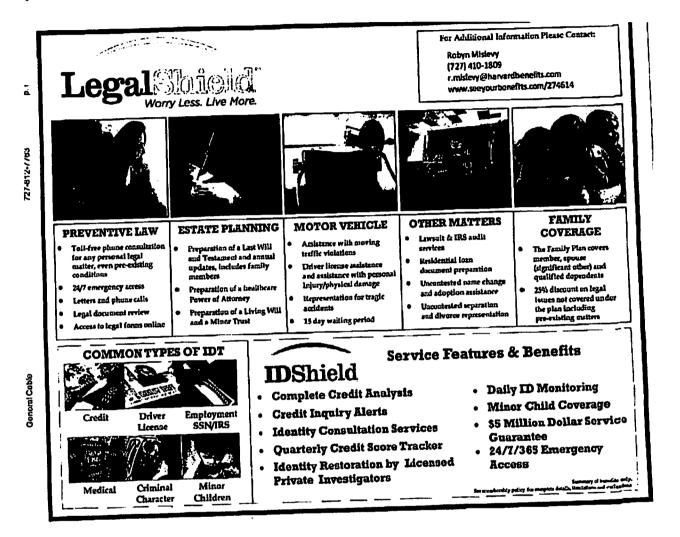
Plaintiff LC Technology International, Inc. ("LC Technology" or "Plaintiff") brings this Class Action Complaint against Defendants Harvard Risk Management Corporation ("Harvard Risk") and Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. D/B/A LegalShield ("LegalShield" and together with Harvard Risk, "Defendants"), to stop their practice of sending unsolicited fax advertisements to consumers and businesses, and to obtain redress for all persons or entities similarly injured by their conduct. Plaintiff LC Technology, for its Class Action Complaint, allege as follows upon personal knowledge as to itself and its own acts and experiences, and, as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by its attorneys.

INTRODUCTION

1. LegalShield and Harvard Risk are engaged in a pyramid sales scheme to sell legal service and identity theft prevention products under the LegalShield and IDShield brands. As part of their marketing scheme Defendants engage in unsolicited fax marketing.



2. Defendants' unsolicited faxes describe the features and benefits of – and promote the purchase of –LegalShield and IDShield branded legal service and identity theft prevention products:



- 3. Defendants sent the faxes at issue to Plaintiff and the Class despite having no previous relationship with them and despite never having obtained consent to send such faxes.
- 4. As such, Defendants' fax advertisements violated the Telephone Consumer

 Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ("TCPA"), and caused Plaintiff and putative members of the

 Class to suffer actual harm, including the occupation of their fax lines and fax machines, the

 aggravation and nuisance of receiving such faxes, as well as the wasted ink, toner, and paper the

consumer shoulders for the Defendants' fax blasts.

5. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks an injunction requiring Defendants to cease all unauthorized fax-based marketing activities, as well as an award of actual and/or statutory damages and costs.

PARTIES

- 6. Plaintiff LC Technology International, Inc. is a Florida corporation headquartered in Clearwater, Florida.
- 7. Defendant Harvard Risk Management Corporation is a Delaware corporation headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Harvard Risk does business in the State of Florida and throughout the United States.
- 8. Defendant Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. d/b/a LegalShield is an Oklahoma corporation headquartered in Ada, Oklahoma. Pre-Paid Legal does business in the State of Florida and throughout the United States.

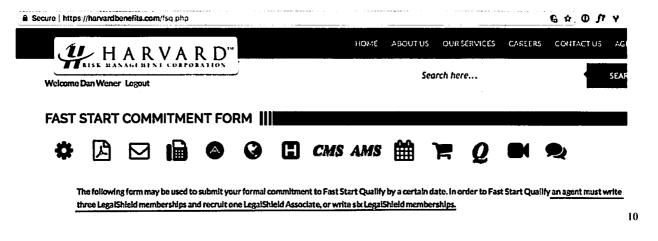
JURISDICTION & VENUE

- 9. This Court has federal question subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331, as the action arises under TCPA.
- 10. The Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants and venue is proper in this
 District because Defendant Harvard Risk is registered to do business in the State of Florida,
 Defendants regularly conducts business in the State of Florida and in this District, and Plaintiff's claims arise from solicitations and/or tortious conduct directed into this District.
- 11. Venue is proper in this District because a significant portion of the events described throughout this Complaint took place within this District, Plaintiff is located in this District, and the faxes were sent to this District.

COMMON ALLEGATIONS OF FACT

LegalShield Operates A Pyramid Scheme Involving Harvard Risk's Sale Of Its Legal Service And Identity Theft Protection Products¹

- 12. LegalShield runs a multi-level marketing scheme to attempt to shield itself from liability for its marketing practices.
- 13. Harvard Risk is one of the top performing marketing agents for Legal Shield. In fact, Harvard Risk exists only to sell LegalShield products including LegalShield and IDShield.
- 14. Harvard Risk's CEO Mark Riches holds the highest title in LegalShield: "Platinum Executive Director for LegalShield." Riches achieved this title because, through his company Harvard Risk, he has recruited thousands of Associates to sell LegalShield's products under him.
- 15. Not surprisingly, when an Associate signs up with Harvard Risk they do so on the condition that they must either (1) sign up three people for LegalShield products *and* recruit one other LegalShield Associate, or (2) sign up six people for LegalShield products:



¹https://web.archive.org/web/20021015101344/http://attorneygeneral.state.wy.us/CPU1PR11300 1.pdf; https://www.thestreet.com/story/10209942/1/pre-paid-weathers-guilty-verdict.html/; https://newsok.com/article/3479952/ftc-ends-investigation-of-pre-paid-legal.

⁷ https://vimeo.com/215363104.

¹⁰ https://harvardbenefits.com/fsq.php.

16. And in fact, every Harvard Risk Associate is also required to be a LegalShield Associate, and each such Harvard Risk/LegalShield shared Associate must pay a LegalShield "Associate fee," which is either a one-time fee of \$99 per year and a monthly fee of \$19.95 or a yearly flat fee of \$249.



- 17. Each Harvard Risk/LegalShield shared Associate is directed by Harvard Risk to use the LegalShield online sales system at https://online.legalshield.com/dashboard and function as a LegalShield Associate. Clearly, a Harvard Risk agent is also a shared LegalShield Associate.
- 18. Harvard Risk and LegalShield jointly train Associates and are aware of their joint Associates' marketing practices.¹⁴

Defendants distribute manuals and other training materials and programs to provide their Associates guidelines for marketing and distributing LegalShield products. Primary in the training are explanations of how to sell LegalShield branded legal service products and IDShield branded identity theft protection products (and Defendants' shared compensation plan for Associates that do so).¹⁸

¹¹ https://harvardbenefits.com/agent-access/la enrollment.php

¹⁴ https://harvardbenefits.com/agent-access/

¹⁸ https://harvardbenefits.com/agent-access/new-agent-training.php

19. Defendants also generate for their Associates standard marketing materials for the LegalShield and IDShield products including some of which are fax-marketing ready:

LegalShield/IDShield Placemat Brochures (single sided)



FACTS SPECIFIC TO PLAINTIFF LC TECHNOLOGY

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20. On September 19, 2016 at 2:48 pm, Defendants transmitted by telephone facsimile machine to Plaintiff LC Technology an unsolicited fax advertisement disseminated by Defendants for use by their shared Associates:



¹⁹ http://www.hrmcstore.com/legalshieldidshield-placemat-brochures-single-sided.

(A copy of the fax advertisement sent by Defendants to Plaintiff is also attached as Exhibit A.)

- 21. The facsimile message advertises group legal plans and identity theft services offered under the LegalShield and IDShield brands. The agent that sent the fax is identified on the facsimile as being associated with Harvard Benefits and is therefore also a LegalShield Associate.
- 22. Harvard Risk and LegalShield jointly profited by and received the benefits of this type of fax marketing.
- 23. Plaintiff LC Technology had not invited or given permission to Defendants to send the fax advertisment and had no prior relationship with Defendants.
- 24. On information and belief, Defendants faxed the same unsolicited facsimile message to Plaintiff LC Technology and more than 40 other recipients without first receiving the recipients' express permission or invitation.
- 25. There is no reasonable means for Plaintiff LC Technology (or any other class member) to avoid receiving unauthorized faxes. Fax machines are left on and ready to receive the urgent communications their owners actually desire to receive.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

26. Plaintiff LC Technology brings this action pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and 23(b)(3) individually and on behalf of Class of similarly situated individuals as follows:

All persons and entities who (1) on or after four years prior to the filing of the initial complaint in this action, (2) received a telephone facsimile advertisement, (3) sent from or on behalf of Defendants, (4) from whom Defendants did not have a record of prior express consent to send the facsimile advertisements.

- 27. The following individuals are excluded from the Class: (1) any Judge or Magistrate presiding over this action and members of their families; (2) Defendants, their subsidiaries, parents, successors, predecessors, and any entity in which Defendants or their parents have a controlling interest and their current or former employees, officers and directors; (3) Plaintiff's attorneys; (4) persons who properly execute and file a timely request for exclusion from the Class; (5) the legal representatives, successors or assigns of any such excluded persons; and (6) persons whose claims against Defendants have been fully and finally adjudicated and/or released. Plaintiff anticipates the need to amend the class definitions following appropriate discovery.
- 28. Numerosity: The exact size of the Class is unknown and unavailable to Plaintiff at this time, but it is clear that individual joinder is impracticable. On information and belief, Defendants faxed unsolicited advertisements to thousands of individuals and entities who fall into the definition of the Class. Class membership can be easily determined from Defendants' records.
- 29. Typicality: Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the other members of the Class. Plaintiff is a member of the Class, and if Defendants violated the TCPA with respect to Plaintiff, then they violated the TCPA with respect to the other members of the Class. Plaintiff and the Class sustained damages as a result of Defendants' uniform wrongful conduct.
- 30. Commonality and Predominance: There are many questions of law and fact common to the claims of Plaintiff and the Class, and those questions predominate over any questions that may affect individual members of the Class. Common questions for the Class include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:
 - a) How Defendants gathered, compiled, or obtained fax numbers of Plaintiff and the Class;

- b) Whether Defendants' faxes advertised the commercial availability or quality of property, goods, or services;
- c) Whether Defendants sent the fax advertisements without first obtaining Plaintiff and the Class's prior express consent to do so; and
- d) Whether Defendants' conduct was willful such that Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to treble damages.
- 31. Adequate Representation: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the Class and has retained counsel competent and experienced in complex class actions. Plaintiff has no interest antagonistic to those of the Class, and Defendants have no defenses unique to Plaintiff.
- 32. Policies Generally Applicable to the Class: This class action is appropriate for certification because Defendants have acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the Class as a whole, thereby requiring the Court's imposition of uniform relief to ensure compatible standards of conduct toward the members of the Class, and making final injunctive relief appropriate with respect to the Class as a whole. Defendants' practices challenged herein apply to and affect the members of the Class uniformly, and Plaintiff's challenge of those practices hinges on Defendants' conduct with respect to the Class as a whole, not on facts or law applicable only to Plaintiff.
- 33. Superiority: This case is also appropriate for class certification because class proceedings are superior to all other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy given that joinder of all parties is impracticable. The damages suffered by the individual members of the Class will likely be relatively small, especially given the burden and expense of individual prosecution of the complex litigation necessitated by Defendants' actions.

Thus, it would be virtually impossible for the individual members of the Class to obtain effective relief from Defendants' misconduct. Even if members of the Class could sustain such individual litigation, it would still not be preferable to a class action, because individual litigation would increase the delay and expense to all parties due to the complex legal and factual controversies presented in this case. By contrast, a class action presents far fewer management difficulties and provides the benefits of single adjudication, economy of scale, and comprehensive supervision by a single court. Economies of time, effort, and expense will be fostered and uniformity of decisions ensured.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION Violation of 47 U.S.C. § 227 (On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

- 34. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 35. The TCPA makes it unlawful for any person to "use any telephone facsimile machine, computer or other device to send, to a telephone facsimile machine, an unsolicited advertisement.

 ..." 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(C).
- 36. The TCPA defines "unsolicited advertisement" as "any material advertising the commercial availability or quality of any property, goods, or services which is transmitted to any person without that person's prior express invitation or permission, in writing or otherwise." 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(5).
- 37. The faxes sent by Defendants advertised the commercial availability and quality of its goods and services and were commercial in nature. Therefore, Defendants' faxes are advertisements under the TCPA.
- 38. Defendants sent the facsimile advertisements at issue to Plaintiff and members of the Class without their prior express invitation or consent, and despite the lack of any prior business

relationship between them and members of the Class.

- 39. By sending the unsolicited advertisement faxes at issue to Plaintiff and members of the No Consent Class without their prior express consent, Defendants violated 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(C).
- 40. As a result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff and the members of the Class suffered actual damages, including the conversion or loss of paper and toner consumed in the printing of the faxes, the loss of use of the recipients' fax machines during the time required to receive, review and route the unauthorized faxes, as well as increased labor expenses.
- 41. Plaintiff and the Class are therefore entitled to a minimum of \$500 in damages for each violation under 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B). To the extent Defendants' misconduct is determined to be willful, the Court should treble the amount of statutory damages.
- 42. Additionally, as a result of Defendants' unlawful conduct, Plaintiff and the other members of the Class are entitled to an injunction under 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(A), to ensure that Defendants' violations of the TCPA do not continue into the future.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff LC Technology, on behalf of itself and the Class, prays for the following relief:

- A. An order certifying this case as a class action on behalf of the Class as defined above; appointing LC Technology as the representative of the Class; and appointing its attorneys as Class Counsel;
- B. An order declaring that Defendants' actions, as set out above, violate the TCPA;
- C. An order declaring that Defendants' faxes constitute unsolicited

advertisements, that they lacked the required opt-out language, and that Defendants sent the faxes without first obtaining prior express invitation, permission, or consent of the recipients, and enjoining Defendants from further violations, and otherwise protecting the interests of the Class;

- D. An award of actual and/or statutory damages;
- E. An award of pre-judgement interest and costs; and
- F. Such further and other relief the Court deems reasonable and just.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff requests a jury trial.

Respectfully Submitted,

LC TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL, INC., individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Dated: July 5, 2018 By: /s/ Avi Kaufman

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JS 44 (Rev. 06'17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		•		
LC TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL, INC., individually and on beha all others similarly situated				If of HARVARD RISK MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, and PRE-PAID LEGAL SERVICES, INC. D/B/A LEGALSHIELD					
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Pinellas County, FL (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence	Dallas County,	s County, TX			
				(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.					
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)				Attorneys (If Known)					
Avi R. Kaufman, Kaufma Miami, FL, 33127; (305)		Street,							
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)				TIZENSHIP OF P. (For Diversity Cases Only)	RINCIPA	L PARTIES	(Place an "X" in On and One Box for I		
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ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Harvard Risk Management</u>, <u>Pre-Paid Legal Services Send Junk Faxes as Part of 'Pyramid Scheme</u>,' <u>Class Action Claims</u>