UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS DALLAS DIVISION

TAMARA PETERSON, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated;

Plaintiff,

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

CIVIL ACTION NO. 3:18-cv-1242

-v.-

FBCS., Inc., CASCADE CAPITAL, LLC SERIES B and JOHN DOES 1-25,

Defendant(s).

Plaintiff Tamara Peterson (hereinafter, "Plaintiff" or "Peterson"), a Texas resident, brings this Class Action Complaint by and through her attorneys, The Law Office of Jonathan Kandelshein, against Defendant FBCS, Inc. (hereinafter "Defendant FBCS") and Defendant Cascade Capital, LLC Series B (hereinafter "Defendant Cascade") individually and on behalf of a class of all others similarly situated, pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, based upon information and belief of Plaintiff's counsel, except for allegations specifically pertaining to Plaintiff, which are based upon Plaintiff's personal knowledge.

INTRODUCTION/PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Congress enacted the The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("FDCPA") in 1977 in response to the "abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection

practices by many debt collectors." 15 U.S.C. §1692(a). At that time, Congress was concerned that "abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of personal bankruptcies, to material instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy." *Id.* Congress concluded that "existing laws...[we]re inadequate to protect consumers," and that "'the effective collection of debts" does not require "misrepresentation or other abusive debt collection practices." 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(b) & (c).

2. Congress explained that the purpose of the Act was not only to eliminate abusive debt collection practices, but also to "insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged." Id. § 1692(e). After determining that the existing consumer protection laws were inadequate, Id § 1692(b), Congress gave consumers a private cause of action against debt collectors who fail to comply with the Act. Id. § 1692k.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. The Court has jurisdiction over this class action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq. The Court has pendent jurisdiction over the State law claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

4. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) as this is where a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of Texas consumers under §1692 et seq. of Title 15 of the United States Code, the FDCPA, and

6. Plaintiff is seeking damages and declaratory relief.

PARTIES

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 Plaintiff is a resident of the State of Texas, County of Dallas, residing at 14833 Bell Manor Court, Mesquite, Texas 75180.

8. FBCS, Inc. is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 330 S. Warminster Rd., Ste. 353, Hatboro, PA 19040.

9. Cascade Capital, LLC Series B is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 1670 Corporate Cir, Ste 202, Petaluma, CA 94954.

10. Upon information and belief, Defendant FBCS is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.

11. Upon information and belief, Defendant Cascade is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.

12. John Does 1-25, are fictitious names of individuals and businesses alleged for the purpose of substituting names of Defendants whose identities will be disclosed in discovery and should be made parties to this action.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiffs bring this claim on behalf of the following case, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ.P. 23(a) and 23(b)(3).

14. The Class consists of:

- a. all individuals with addresses in the State of Texas;
- b. to whom Defendant FBCS sent an initial collection letter attempting to collect a consumer debt;
- c. on behalf of debt buyer Defendant Cascade;

- d. that includes a settlement offer which acts to overshadow the consumer's §1692g protections;
- e. which letter was sent on or after a date one (1) year prior to the filing of this action and on or before a date twenty-one (21) days after the filing of this action.

15. The identities of all class members are readily ascertainable from the records of Defendants and those companies and entities on whose behalf they attempt to collect and/or have purchased debts.

16. Excluded from the Plaintiff Class is the Defendants and all officer, members, partners, managers, directors and employees of the Defendants and their respective immediate families, and legal counsel for all parties to this action, and all members of their immediate families.

17. There are questions of law and fact common to the Plaintiff Class, which common issues predominate over any issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibits A, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e and 1692g.

18. The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the class members, as all are based upon the same facts and legal theories. The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Plaintiff Class defined in this complaint. The Plaintiff has retained counsel with experience in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions, and neither the Plaintiff nor her attorneys have any interests, which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action. 19. This action has been brought, and may properly be maintained, as a class action pursuant to the provisions of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because there is a well-defined community interest in the litigation:

- a. <u>Numerosity:</u> The Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that the Plaintiff Class defined above are is numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical.
- b. <u>Common Questions Predominate:</u> Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Plaintiff Class and those questions predominance over any questions or issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is \whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibit A violate 15 U.S.C. § 1692e and §1692g.
- <u>Typicality</u>: The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the class members.
 The Plaintiff and all members of the Plaintiff Class have claims arising out of the Defendants' common uniform course of conduct complained of herein.
- d. <u>Adequacy:</u> The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class members insofar as Plaintiff has no interests that are adverse to the absent class members. The Plaintiff is committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiff has also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither the Plaintiff nor her counsel have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.
- e. <u>Superiority:</u> A class action is superior to the other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because individual joinder of all

members would be impracticable. Class action treatment will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum efficiently and without unnecessary duplication of effort and expense that individual actions would engender.

20. Certification of a class under Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is also appropriate in that the questions of law and fact common to members of the Plaintiff Class predominate over any questions affecting an individual member, and a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

21. Depending on the outcome of further investigation and discovery, Plaintiff may, at the time of class certification motion, seek to certify a class(es) only as to particular issues pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

22. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.

23. Some time prior to June 6, 2017, an obligation was allegedly incurred to Jefferson Emergency Med Assc P ("Jefferson Emergency").

24. The Jefferson Emergency is an alleged medical debt obligation which arose out of transactions where money, property, insurance or services were primarily for personal, family or household purposes.

25. The alleged Jefferson Emergency obligation is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C.§ 1692a(5).

26. Jefferson Emergency is a "creditor" as defined by 15 U.S.C.§ 1692a(4).

27. Defendant Cascade, a debt collector and the subsequent owner of the Jefferson Emergency debt, contracted Defendant FBCS, Inc. to collect the alleged debt.

28. Defendant FBCS collects and attempts to collect debts incurred or alleged to have been incurred for personal, family or household purposes on behalf of creditors using the United States Postal Services, telephone and internet.

Violation I – June 6, 2017 Collection Letter

29. On or about June 6, 2017, Defendant FBCS sent the Plaintiff an initial contact notice (the "Letter") regarding the alleged debt owed to Defendant Cascade. See Letter at Exhibit A.

30. When a debt collector solicits payment from a consumer, it must, within five days of an initial communication provide the consumer with a written validation notice which must include the following information:

(1) the amount of the debt;

(2) the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed;

(3) a statement that unless the consumer, within thirty days after receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the debt collector;

(4) a statement that if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirtyday period that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, the debt collector will obtain verification of the debt or a copy of the judgment against the consumer and a copy of such verification or judgment will be mailed to the consumer by the debt collector; and

(5) a statement that, upon the consumer's written request within the thirty-day period, the debt collector will provide the consumer with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a).

31. The FDCPA further provides that "if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirty day period . . . that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed . . . the debt collector shall cease collection . . . until the debt collector obtains verification of the debt . . . and a copy of such verification is mailed to the consumer by the debt collector." 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(b).

32. Although a collection letter may track the statutory language, "the collector nevertheless violates the Act if it conveys that information in a confusing or contradictory fashion so as to cloud the required message with uncertainty." <u>Russell v. EQUIFAX A.R.S.</u>, 74 F.3d 30, 35 (2d Cir. 1996) ("It is not enough for a debt collection agency to simply include the proper debt validation notice in a mailing to a consumer-- Congress intended that such notice be clearly conveyed."). Put differently, a notice containing "language that 'overshadows or contradicts' other language informing a consumer of her rights . . . violates the Act." <u>Russell</u>, 74 F.3d at 34.

33. The Letter offers payment options to settle the debt for less than the full amount allegedly owed by Plaintiff.

34. The settlement offer does not explicitly extend past the 30 day validation period.

35. Furthermore the bottom of the Letter states "FBCS, Inc. is not obligated to renew this offer."

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36. This language overshadows the "G-Notice" under the FDCPA as the consumer would believe she must pay immediately to accept the settlement option in lieu of exercising her 30 day rights to validate of dispute the debt.

37. Defendants are aware that during the collection of this debt, these settlement offers will always be available to the consumer and threatening otherwise is only deceptive and coercive - aimed to get the consumer to pay immediately.

38. This false language further serves to overshadow the consumer's rights under the G-Notice who would believe she must pay immediately before the offer was reneged.

38. Plaintiff incurred an informational injury as Defendants deceptively and coercively failed to advise Plaintiff that the proposed settlement offers were always open to her in the future.

39. Defendants' false statement overshadowed Plaintiff's §1692g right to dispute or validate the debt as she believed she must pay immediately to avoid losing the opportunity to settle.

40. As a result of Defendants' deceptive, misleading and unfair debt collection practices, Plaintiff has been damaged.

COUNT I VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692e *et seq.*

41. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.

42. Defendants' debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

43. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692e, a debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

44. Defendants violated §1692e :

- a. As the Letter it is open to more than one reasonable interpretation, at least one of which is inaccurate.
- b. By making a false and misleading representation in violation of §1692e(10).

45. By reason thereof, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendants' conduct violated Section 1692e et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

<u>COUNT II</u> VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692g et seq.

46. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.

47. Defendants' debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692g.

48. Pursuant to 15 USC §1692g, a debt collector:

Within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt, a debt collector shall, unless the following information is contained in the initial communication or the consumer has paid the debt, send the consumer a written notice containing –

- 1. The amount of the debt;
- 2. The name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed;

- A statement that unless the consumer, within thirty days after receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the debt-collector;
- 4. A statement that the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within thirty-day period that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, the debt collector will obtain verification of the debt or a copy of a judgment against the consumer and a copy of such verification or judgment will be mailed to the consumer by the debt collector; and
- 5. A statement that, upon the consumer's written request within the thirtyday period, the debt collector will provide the consumer with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

49. The Defendants violated 15 U.S.C. §1692g, offering a settlement offer which was limited by Defendants' statement "we are not obligated to renew this offer" and which overshadowed the "g-notice" language and coerces the consumer to pay immediately instead of exerting her rights under the FDCPA.

50. By reason thereof, Defendants is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendants' conduct violated Section 1692g et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

51. Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby requests a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Tamara Peterson, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, demands judgment from Defendant FBCS, Inc. and Defendant Cascade Capital, LLC Series B, as follows:

1. Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying Plaintiff as Class representative, and Jonathan Kandelshein, Esq. as Class Counsel;

2. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;

3. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;

4. Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses;

5. Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and

6. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: May 15, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,

THE LAW OFFICE OF JONATHAN KANDELSHEIN

/s/ Jonathan Kandelshein Jonathan Kandelshein TX Bar No. 24094768 18208 Preston Rd, Ste D-9 #256 Dallas, TX 75252 Ph: 469-677-7863 jonathan.kandelshein@gmail.com Counsel for Plaintiff Tamara Peterson

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17) - TXND (Rev. 06/17) Case 3:18-cv-01242-C CONTROL CO

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS Tamara Peterson, individua	ally and on behalf of all o	others similarly situat	DEFENDANTS'' FBCS, Inc., Cascade Capital, LLC Series B and John Does 1-25					
 (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff <u>Dallas</u> (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) (c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) The Law Offices of Jonathan Kandelshein 18208 Preston Rd. Ste D-9 #256, Dallas, TX 75252 Ph: 469-677-7863 				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant" (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)" NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED." Attorneys (If Known)"				
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION VII. REQUESTED IN' COMPLAINT:'' VIII. RELATED CASI	DN' 15 USC Sect. 1692 Brief description of ca Deceptive and mis CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	et seq. Fair Debt Co use:" leading debt collectio IS A CLASS ACTION	llection I	Do not cite jurisdictional stat	utes unless diversity):" 1 letters	if demanded in complaint:"		
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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 there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.
- 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 – Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.

Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statue.

- 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 a related case exists, whether pending or closed, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases. A case is related to this filing if the case: 1) involves some or all of the same parties and is based on the same or similar claim; 2) involves the same property, transaction, or event; 3) involves substantially similar issues of law and fact; and/or 4) involves the same estate in a bankruptcy appeal.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

EXHIBIT A

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Male No

FROM: P.O. Box 1116 Charlotte, NC 28201-1116 FBCS Inc 330 S. WARMINSTER RD. SUITE 353 HATBORO, PA 19040 1-866-594-8647

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

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June 6, 2017

Tamara Peterson

Current Creditor: CASCADE CAPITAL, LLC SERIES B File #: 1966

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Interested in saving \$692.40, read on ...

Our client, CASCADE CAPITAL, LLC SERIES B, has authorized us to accept a 60% discount off your \$1,154.00 outstanding balance to settle the account in full. The complete details of your account are:

We can accept this reduced amount under your preferred option:

- Pay the full amount of \$461.60 to us in one payment.
- 3
- ray the full amount of \$401.60 to us in one payment. Pay \$92.32 as a down-payment and the remaining balance of \$369.28, 30 days after your 1st payment is received. You may have an opportunity to split your settlement into 6 payments of \$76.93 each. Call our office for details. Contact one of our agents, who have been specially trained to listen to your circumstances and guide you through the process, there may be other payment options available based on your specific situation. Call us, toll free, at I-866-594-8647. Agents trained to handle your specific account are available: â

Monday through Friday 9:00 am through 7:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am through 12:30 pm (All times listed are Eastern Standard Time)

Or visit our website at www.fbcs-inc.com for 24 hour payment options.

This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. This communication is from a debt collector.

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days from receiving this notice, that the debt or any portion thereof is disputed, this office will obtain verification 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 writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor. creditor.

FBCS. Inc. is not obligated to renew this offer.

· Detach Here ·

Detach and return this portion with your payment. Enter the requested information in the spaces provided as

Hours of operation: Monday

* Detach Here +

9:00 am - 7:00 pm

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: Lawsuit Against FBCS, Cascade Capital Claims Settlement Offer Overshadowed Debt Dispute Rights